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THE INDEPENDENT

Nº 3,275 SATURDAY 19 APRIL 1997 WEATHER: Mainly dry (IR65p) 60p

Our chaos strategy is working, say IRA

David McKittrick, Jason Bennetto and Esther Leach

The IRA is expected to continue its tactics of mass disruption after a Republican source revealed yesterday that the terrorist organisatino believes the strategy is "working".

Two explosions and a series of coded warnings caused travel chaos throughout the Midlaods and north of England yesterday.

The terrorist organisation again targeted key rail and motorway links effectively cutting off the oorth from the sooth of the country for many hours.

Two devices exploded at Doncaster and Leeds, but noone was injured. The train stations and city centres also of Stoke on Trent and Crewe were also evacuated and two long stretches of the M6 were closed for five hours.

The attacks follow the pattern of recent incidents which the IRA plainly regards as highly successful exercises in gaining the limelight during the election campaign.

A republican source yesterday repeated that the strategy was aimed at causing maximum disruption and maximum publicity coverage with a minimum of threat to the lives of the civilian population.

The source told *The Independent*: "It is the classic republican position – that bombs or disruptioo in England have more of an impact than it has in Ireland. You can see it is working because John Major's having to answer questions about it at his morning press confereoces. That's how it's impacting."

The comments suggest that the IRA is aware that by issuing early morning warnings – yesterday's were given at just after 7am– it can dominate the election agenda throughout the day and force John Major to respood at the Conservatives early morning press conference.

A similar pattern was followed just before Easter when a small bomb was planted near Wilmslow railway station and in the first week of April when the M6 and M1 were targeted. At the end of that week, the Grand National was disrupted by a coded warning.

Yesterday's alerts caused disruption to millions of travellers and workers and cost millions of pounds in lost business.

The bomb in Doncaster went off at 10.10am on a road over a rail bridge to the oorth of the town. The railway station was closed and the surrounding area evacuated from about 7.15am, blocking two rail lines.

The secood explosion was at a relay cabinet containing signalling equipment oear Leeds station car park just before 9am. No-ooe was hurt, but the city ceotre was immediately cordoned off and remained closed for about six hours. The station was still closed last night as searches continued.

Keith Hellawell, chief coostable of West Yorkshire, said the warning call to Leeds was oot accompanied with a codeword. He said: "If this is a new tactic, and I don't know that it is, then it is a despicable action – we are sinking further into the depths of depravity."

Bomb squad officers carried out a controlled explosion at the train statioo in Stoke on Trent to gain access to main foyer area after a coded warning was given just after 7am.

In Crewe warning was telephoned to a local hospital and the train station was closed until late in the afternoon. An area of a quarter mile radius around the station was evacuated.

On the M6 two sections – one in Staffordshire, the other north of Manchester – were closed in both directions following coded warnings.

Major's position on Europe

Anthony Bevins
Political Editor

The portrayal of Tuoy Blair as the British dummy on the knee of the German Chancellor, Helmut Kohl, was yesterday roundly denounced by Tories, Labour and the Germans as "puerile", "pathetic", and "pitiful". But John Major and his senior colleagues appeared delighted by the controversy and the raised profile of their campaign to paint Labour as a party of sell-out and surrender.

Elmer Brnk, a seninr MP from the German Christian Democrat Party, who is tn represent the European Parliament at the Amsterdam summit fur heads of government in June, said the advertisement was pitiful. "It just goes to show how desperate the Conservative Party has become," he said. "We should be partners with Britain in building Europe - not fighting a battle."

While Labour dismissed the attack as pathetic, Edwina Currie, the frrmer Tory minister, called it "puerile". Conservative pro-Europeans are increasingly concerned by the way in which the Prime Minister has raised the stakes no his European campaign – and the way he appears to be "singing from Juhn Redwood's hymn sheet". But Mr Major and Michael Heseltine, the Deputy Prime Minister, laughed nff the criticism at their daily election press conference yesterday.

The Prime Minister said that Helmut Kohl was a "doughty fighter" for German interests – unlike Mr Blair, who had already offered six surrenders before he had even entered the negotiations. According tn Mr Major, the Labour leader was telling the Germans and the Freoch, "I've changed my red flag for a white flag, here are my surrenders, please can I have a seat; if you doo't have a seat I'll have a knee."

Last night, Mr Major weot even further in his attack on Mr Blair, telling a Manchester rally that on Europe, the Labour leader had changed "frnm withdrawal through indecisioo to unconditional surrender".

He added: "Mr Blair changes his mind as ofteo as a grasshopper jumps." Changing metaphor, he added that other European leaders would eat him alive. "It would be like sending a fly to a spiders' conventioo."

Independent: business journal of the year

The Independent has woo the *Financial Journal* of the Year award from the Wincott Foundation. This is the second time that the newspaper has won the award, the most prestigious in financial journalism.

The judges praised *The Independent*'s coverage of business, city aod economics for its campaigning style, sound judgment, high oumber nf scoops and visual impact.

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QUICKLY

New HIV scandal
Fears about the safety nf blood have raised yesterday after the National Blood Service disclosed that three patients had been infected with HIV after receiving transfusions duriog hospital treatment. Page 5

Cheap drugs fear
A cut price version of Ecstasy is among three new drugs to have hit the dance markets causing concern that young people will be tempted to try illicit substances. Page 6

Bibi hangs on
The future of Benjamin Netanyahu remains in doubt after support for the beleaguered Israeli prime oinister seemed to ebb away among his cabinet and governing coalition. Page 15

Vanessa spells out her new revolution: vote Ashdown

Kim Sengupta

Vanessa Redgrave has not given up on her struggle radically to change society. The only thing that has changed is the means tn the end. On 1 May the fnmer Trotskyite revolutionary will be voting for Paddy Ashdown's Liberal Democrats.

Times have changed. Her allegiance used tn be to the Workers' Revolutionary Party, whose battlecry in the heady days of class warfare was "Labour aod the SDP, the running dogs of the bourgeoisie". But now Ms Redgrave feels that it is the Liberal Democrats who nffer the best hnpe for ushering in a more just, and fair system.

That is not the only change. Ms Redgrave believes that faced with what she sees as an authoritarian Conservative government introducing draconian legislation leading towards a police state, society has two bulwarks of defence – the judiciary, and the press. One of her main references to support her views is *The Economist*, a publicatioo that has never been seen as a bible of Marxism-Leninism.

These new favoured institutions, of course, featured prominently in the demonology of the hard-left in the past.

Alarmed: Redgrave, still seeking justice Photograph: Kalpesh Lathigra

WRP leaders like Gerry Healy regularly lambasted these "arms of the state" trying to destabilise and destroy his organisation.

However Ms Redgrave remains a member of the Marxist Party which was launched 10 years ago. And she says she is "extremely alarmed, and angry" at the way the Establishment is running the country.

But the Marxist Party is not putting up any candidates. And Ms Redgrave is a passionate opponent of the law and order measures – the Criminal Justice Act, the new Police Act, the Crime Sentences Act, and the Asylum Bill – being brnught in by Michael Howard. She is a prominent member nf the lobby group set up tn oppose this, the Charter for Basic Rights.

Ms Redgrave said: "I spoke tn Paddy Ashdown a few months ago at the House of Commnns wheo I was there for a meeting against the Asylum and Immigration Bill, which is an apalling piece of legislation.

"He assured me the Liberal Democrats are opposed to it, and I believe him. So I shall be voting Liberal Democrat at my constituency nf Brentford and Isleworth.

"I shall also be speaking to the Labour candidate there, but the Labour Party has done very little to oppose any of these very unfair measures brought in by the Governmeot, so I cannot see how I can vote for them."

Ms Redgrave, 60, the scion nf ooe nf the most famous thespian families of the country, aod described as the greatest British actress nf her generation, cootinoes to speak out against what she sees as injustice.

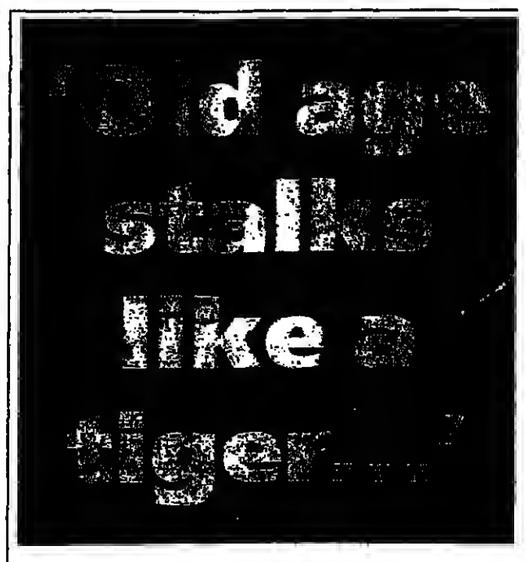
Old Labour win new peerages in dissolution honours list

Fran Abrams
Political Correspondent

It's payback time today for three Old Labour MPs who stood down to make way for New Labour. In a case of "old Labour, oew peerages," Geoffrey Lofthouse, John Evans and Doug Hoyle have beeo given life peerages in the first dissolution honours list to be released during a general election since 1970. A month ago the three said they realised another five years in politics would be a long time. Others in their party were less sure, and more than one hinted that honours had heen offered as inducemeots.

The trio will no doubt express shock and delight at today's oews, and look forward with renewed vigour to jobs fnr life in the House of Lords. Rumours of the ennoblements had been circulating for months hut all had been rebutted.

In March the *Times* even carried an apology to Mr Lofthouse for the suggestion that he was about to go. The three, former MPs respectively for Pontefract and Castleford, St Helens North and Warringtnn North, are among 21 retiring members who have all been made life peers in the first honours list to during a general clection since 1970.



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Firefighters' strike likely as hopes of settlement fade

Talks aimed at averting a firefighters' strike looked set to fail yesterday as army Green Goddesses stood by as cover during industrial action.

Officials of the Fire Brigades Union were meeting leaders of Essex County Council to try to resolve a dispute over £1.5m in spending cuts. Two union negotiators left the meeting early and said it had broken down, meaning the first 24-hour strike would start at 10am today. But the council insisted the talks were still continuing at lunchtime. One union negotiator said: "I have not seen any glimmer of light during the talks and my hopes of a settlement are fading." The union is planning further walkouts next Monday and Wednesday, in protest at the cuts, which the council has blamed on government underfunding.

Boy gave life to save girlfriend

A 14-year-old girl described yesterday how her boyfriend saved her life at the cost of his own when he used his body as a shield to protect her from a car.

Paul Broughton, 16, pushed his girlfriend out of the way and took the impact himself, an inquest heard. He was thrown into the path of a second car and died of heart failure during emergency surgery three hours later. His girlfriend, 14-year-old Laura Gledhill, escaped serious injury. The accident happened when Paul, of Monk Bretton, South Yorkshire, and Laura were on their way home from a bonfire-night party. His father, Alan Broughton, 47, said: "Paul's action was typical of him – he was a very courageous lad." Laura said: "Paul ... saved my life. As he lay in the road he called 'Laura', that was the last word he said. I thought the world of him." Christopher Dorries, the coroner, recorded a verdict of accidental death.

Triple killer goes back to Broadmoor

Alan Reeve (left), the triple killer who escaped from Broadmoor top-security hospital 16 years ago, appeared before magistrates yesterday after being extradited from the Irish Republic.

He escaped from Broadmoor in 1981 where he was being held for killing his friend Roger Jacksoo when the pair were 15. He was arrested two weeks ago in Cork, where he had been living with his fiancée and baby son, and working as a typesetter at the Cork Women's Poetry Circle. Reeve, 49, was re-arrested on warrants relating to the murders of Roger Jacksoo and a fellow Broadmoor inmate, Billy Doyle, 22. In 1981 he escaped to Holland where he killed a policeman in a bungled off-licence raid. He spent 10 years in a Dutch prison, then went to ground. After the hearing in Bracknell, Berkshire, Reeve was driven to Broadmoor.

Prison service resignation

One of the Prison Service's most senior managers resigned his post yesterday, becoming the latest penal expert to call for a Royal Commission on crime and punishment to "untangle crime and punishment from the politics of law and order".

In his resignation speech at the Edinburgh/Cambridge Society last night, Dr David Wilson, head of prison-officer and operational training for England and Wales, declared he could no longer be part of a process hijacked by the lowest form of politics, and obsessed with locking more and more people up. As well as the Conservative government, he attacked the media and television programmes such as *Crimewatch* for their obsession with violent crime and criminals. A Royal Commission would, he said, allow for rational, non-partisan debate, finding solutions that would "develop our nation rather than turn it into a Gulag".

Patricia Wynn Davies

Body-parts sculptor filed by police

The Metropolitan Police last night confirmed they had sent a file on the sculptor Anthony-Noel Kelly to the Crown Prosecution Service.

Mr Kelly, 41, reported for bail at Vauxhall police station in London on Thursday and is due back to a different station in London in June. He was arrested earlier this month after police searched his studio in south London and his family home in Kent; taking away a number of human parts and pieces of art. Mr Kelly, a cousin of the Duke of Norfolk, has previously admitted using human body parts for plaster casts in his work.

Mark Rowe

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Niki Reynolds: 'I just wanted him away from me' *(Photograph: Paul Ross)*

Mugger feels the heat as victim fights fire with fire

A woman escaped an attempted mugging by burning her attacker's crotch with the flame from her cigarette lighter, police in London have confirmed.

Niki Reynolds, a 37-year-old mother of three, was walking home through Maida Vale, north-west London, one evening when she was grabbed from behind by a man who got out of a battered BMW. He held a short knife to her throat and demanded money.

"I was just walking along minding my own business when a car with two men inside pulled alongside and a guy jumped out," Ms Reynolds said yesterday. "He started shouting at me asking for money and then became more aggressive. With his left hand he hit me on the jaw and with his other hand he pulled out a knife and held it to my throat. It was more the shock than the pain which stunned me."

After a struggle, Ms Reynolds, who had been about to light a cigarette, put her lighter behind her, held it against her attackers crotch and flicked its flame. "I just wanted him away from me and off my body," she said. "I wasn't really thinking about what I was doing. "He didn't have a clue what I was doing but after a few seconds of struggling the heat suddenly hit him and he pulled away swearing and shouting. The next thing I knew he had fallen on the ground. The other guy in the car was swearing at him and he stumbled back to the car. I was rooted to the spot to the spot because I was terrified that if I ran they would be able to catch up with me. Thankfully they just drove off." Apart from the shock of the attack, Ms Reynolds was unharmed and no money was taken.

Pc Jane Mallia, of Harrow Road Robbery Squad said: "The place she held the lighter is a sensitive area, I believe. His trousers did not catch fire but he was clearly in a lot of pain.

"It was a heroic thing and it did raise a smile among the police officers. But we would not recommend that anybody do this as it could have provoked the man and made him angrier."

Mark Rowe and Simon Reeve

Leukaemia sister reconsiders bone marrow donation

The sister of a woman dying from leukaemia was yesterday reconsidering her refusal to donate life-saving bone marrow to her.

Susan Squires, 34, was said to have denied the transplant to her sister Angela Latham ,34, (pictured) because she was terrified of hospitals.

Doctors had found Ms Squires to be the only perfect match for Mrs Latham after searching a worldwide register of 4 million donors. The sisters who live 500 yards away from each other in Blackpool have not spoken to each other in almost three years after Ms Squires' phobia of hospitals led her to refuse her sister the chance of a transplant. But after a meeting with Ms Squires yesterday, Mrs Latham's husband Paul said: "She's had a bit of a change of heart. At least now she's thinking about it ... We had more conversation in half-an-hour this morning than in the last three years."

Mrs Latham's leukaemia was diagnosed three years ago and since then she has undergone chemotherapy and is now on daily medication.

Ms Squires was surprised to learn yesterday that the bone marrow donation could be performed at her home. Dr Si Ahmed, chairman of the Blackpool branch of the British Medical Association, said the operation was quick, safe, involved minimal pain and could be performed outside the hospital environment.

Mrs Latham said: "I think this is a breakthrough. She is petrified of hospitals, but she now knows that she doesn't have to go into hospital, but can instead go to her GP or to a clinic. I hope she loves me enough to do it."

Glenda Cooper

Diamond dagger award for Morse author

Inspector Morse creator Colin Dexter has won this year's acclaimed Cartier Diamond Dagger Award for his outstanding contribution to detective writing.

The Oxford-based author has written 12 novels about the laconic Inspector and his sidekick Lewis. Mr Dexter has also appeared in the background of 27 out of 30 *Inspector Morse* programmes made by Central TV.

The Crime Writers' Association also awards gold and silver daggers to outstanding writers in the genre. Previous winners of the diamond dagger, founded in 1986, include John le Carré, PD James, Dick Francis and Ruth Rendell.

The trophy, made by jewellers Cartier London, is made of gold and silver with a large ruby cabochon surrounded by diamonds.

Dexter, 66, has said that "Morse, like me, is something of a miserable, old sod, semi-autobiographical..." He also shares his character's passion for classical studies, and has urged that Latin and Greek be taught in comprehensive schools.

David Lister

briefing

HEALTH

Young men storing up trouble by behaving badly

The thought that men may one day be over weight rarely crosses their minds. A new survey from Mintel, exclusive to *The Independent*, shows that less than a quarter of men in their late teens and early twenties make an effort to stick to a low-fat diet. While almost three in ten women at this age eat little or no red meat, less than one in ten men has taken red meat off the menu.

As well as a penchant for hamburger and chips, young men are more likely than any other group in society to drink heavily, although young women are catching up fast. Eighteen per cent of men in their twenties and early thirties are heavy drinkers, according to Mintel, compared with 8 per cent of women of a similar age.

It is not all about men behaving badly. More than half of men in their late teens and early twenties exercise at least once a week. So, in spite of their diet nearly two-thirds are either about the right weight, or slightly underweight. They may, however, be storing up trouble for later. David Booth, Professor of Psychology and Eating at Birmingham University says: "Premature heart disease is a male issue and heart attacks at 40 are in part a result of what men have laid down through their eating habits during their 20s".

Healthy Lifestyles, published by Mintel, 18-19 Long Lane, London EC1A 9HE; £895.

Full report: The Long Weekend, page 21

HOUSING

London facing homes shortage

People are flocking back to the capital. The population of London, recently described in a number of guide books as "The Happening City" is booming again.

A rise in the number of European nationals moving to London, with a fall in the number of people leaving the city, has upset planners' forecast for the next 20 years. The corollary of this is that there has been a severe underestimation of the number of new homes that will be needed for the city, according to a survey by Dr Martin Mogridge and Professor John Parr of Glasgow University.

Their report, *A Study for London Transport Planning*, suggests there will be a demand for up to 436,000 new homes by 2016 – not the 300,000 forecast by the Department of Environment.

Dr Mogridge said the DoE's own research suggests that immigration would continue to rise until 2011, before falling again. He said that while controls have tightened to stem the flow of Commonwealth immigrants, European nationals are now freer than ever to come to Britain.

Kim Sengupta

SOCIETY

Callers abusing police 999 service

Two-thirds of 999 calls made to police are not emergencies, according to a survey. West Midlands Police answered more than 468,000 emergency calls last year, including nearly 15,500 from people asking for the number of their local station. Eleven thousand were from children calling by mistake, 6,500 were from people asking for advice on civil matters, nearly 26,000 were silent calls made from telephone kiosks and just under 4,000 were from drunken or abusive callers.

BUSINESS

Post Office sell-off widely opposed

Privatising the Post Office would be as unpopular as ever, according to a new opinion poll which showed a huge majority in favour of keeping the service public.

The MORI poll for the Communication Workers' Union found only 5 per cent of 2,000 people in favour of selling off the Post Office as a whole. Joint general secretary Derek Hodgson said: "It would be a perversion of democracy for any political party to push forward with proposals supported by such a tiny minority. The debate about the Post Office should finish here. The people's message is clear – hands off."

The union believes the poll shows that the future of the Post Office should be taken out of the political arena. The Tories have said they will consider different forms of privatising the Royal Mail if it wins the election and will sell off Parcelforce.

EMPLOYMENT

Sex war looms for Welsh speakers

Employers in Wales who don't know their gwr from their gwraig were warned yesterday that they may be breaching sex discrimination rules.

The Equal Opportunities Commission has cast its eye over Welsh language job titles and found that many are masculine with no obvious female versions.

The problem is, that unlike the English language, all Welsh nouns are either masculine or feminine so that when employers advertise for example, for a rheolwr (manager) they imply they are looking for a male manager because of the suffix 'wr' which comes from gwr, Welsh for man. The Welsh for driver (gyrrwr) also implies a man, as does miner (glowr) and judge (barnwr).

There is a female suffix, wraig from the Welsh for woman, gwraig, which could be used instead, but language purists says it would lead to words being artificially invented. They say that campaigners are confusing gender with sex.

Val Feld, Equal Opportunities director in Wales, said that now the research has been completed the EOC would be drawing up guidelines for employers.

Roger Dobson

Australia to deport triple-killer to Britain

The Australian authorities have begun moves to return triple murderer Archie "Mad Dog" McCafferty to Britain.

McCafferty, 49, who went to Australia as a 10-year-old with his family but never became an Australian citizen, was given three life sentences in 1974 for leading a gang which killed three men in the space of five days. While in jail, he was convicted of the manslaughter of another prisoner.

New South Wales Parole Board yesterday granted McCafferty parole, after four earlier applications were been rejected, and ordered his release by 3 May. "We would expect at the point in time when he is released from detention that the [deportation] order should be carried out," Australian Immigration Minister Philip Ruddock said. British Consul-General Philip Morrice said Britain had accepted the decision.

However, there was anger in McCafferty's former home city of Glasgow. Michael Martin, who is seeking re-election as Labour MP for the Springburn constituency, said: "I have no quarrel with the parole board's decision, I am by no means a 'hang them and flog them MP' – but the decision to deport him is morally wrong, and I have complained to the Foreign Office. My concern is that the Australian authorities, and in particular this immigration minister will use the UK – and most likely Glasgow, as a dumping ground for people they consider to be unworthy to stay in their country."

The random murders which led to McCafferty's life sentence began after he said he suffered a delusion while visiting the grave of his baby son — who suffocated while breastfeeding — telling him to kill seven people.

He remained obsessed with the number seven in prison, writing an autobiography entitled *Seven Shall Die* and was initially considered an aggressive and extremely dangerous prisoner.

However, parole board judge Des Ward said that by 1988 McCafferty was seen as a model prisoner who was quiet, co-operative, and able to relate to people normally.

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The rise and rise of the laddery from Loaded

Paul McCann
Media Correspondent

James Brown, the fatber of Laddism and the editor of the phenomenally successful men's magazine *Loaded* has turned his attentioo to the more staid men's monthly *GQ*.

Mr Brown, 31, announced yesterday that he is leaving *Loaded* to become editor of the upmarket *GQ* which sells over 200,000 copies a month less than *Loaded*.

Coodé Nast, publisher of *GQ*, denies that Mr Brown is planning to change their magazine io order to chase the sales of *Loaded*.

However, Nicholas Coleridge, Condé Nast's managing director, confirmed that Mr Brown would take the magazine closer to the style it had under Michael Vermuelen, who died two years ago from a drug overdose. Since then the magazine has been edited by the more cerebral Angus McKinnon who resigned from Condé Nast yesterday.

Loaded was launched by IPC Magazines in 1994 with target sales of about 40,000. In the last six months of 1996 its audit sale was around 375,000 and the latest issue are understood to be selling more than 400,000 copies a month.

Mr Brown said: "I won't talk about Laddism and all that bollocks, that shows a lack of understanding of what *Loaded* is about. I'm not a 25-year-old loafer any more, I'm confronting new things in my life now and *GQ* will give me much greater scope.

"I want to make the magazine very exciting and funny and full of commanding journalism. It is a natural step on."

Mr Brown and Tim Southwell, both former pop music paper journalists came up with the *Loaded* concept and convinced IPC to publish it.

Mr Brown's appointment should inevitably mark a change of direction for *GQ*. It was launched in the UK in 1988 and stayed stubbornly under the 100,000 sales mark until the men's style magazine market took off on the back of *Loaded's* success. It has risen steadily to 150,000, but has been eclipsed by EMAP's *FHM*, which was redesigned in the *Loaded* mould and is now selling close to 500,000 copies a month.

Loaded is famous for its fixation with naked women, alcohol, drugs and football. Its early journalistic innovations have included a Biscuit of the Month review and a comparison of snack foods, called the Crisp Olympics.

James Brown: 'I'm oot a 25-year-old loafer any more, I'm confronting new things in my life' Photomontage: Jonathan Anstee/Main Photograph: Adrian Dennis

The magazine's editorial staff has made no secret of their love for mind-altering substances, but Mr Coleridge denies he is concerned about James Brown's reputatioo. "After all we haven't employed Will Self," he said.

Loaded, the sit-com *Men Behaving Badly* and Nick Hornby's *Fever Pitch* oovel have been credited with creating a culture of Laddish behaviour characterised by a taste for sex, lager and football. However, many argue that Laddism is a media label for something that always existed. Whatever the arguments, the effect has been that even the more up-market men's magazines, like *GQ* and *Esquire*, have been forced to increase the amount of flesh on their covers and in their pages.

Lads' magazines have even been credited with WH Smith's decision in January to withdraw soft-porn magazines from its top shelves, because *Loaded* and *FHM* had affected their sales.

The lads' magazines have attracted a host of imitators, including *Maxim* from Dennis publishing and specialist spin-offs such as IPC's *Loaded for foodies*, *Eat Soup*, and *Stuff*, Dennis publishing's "big boys' toys" magazine.

Mr Brown is expected to leave *Loaded* in the summer. A replacement has yet to be found but David Lancaster, editor of *Eat Soup* and Martin Deeson, deputy editor of *Loaded* are tipped to succeed him.

The changing men's market has caused a switch-around in editors for all the main men's titles. Mike Soutar left *FHM* last month to become managing director of Kiss FM while Peter Howarth moved from *Arena* to *Esquire* to replace *The Independent on Sunday*'s editor Rosie Boycott.

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IT IS. ARE YOU?

A modern morality tale: the Co-op raider

Ian Burrell

It was a movement founded oo promises to take on capitalism and improve the living cooditions of the British working man. But now the oew man with the slick hairstyle and the sharp suit is promising to sweep away the old image of cloth caps and terraced streets forever.

Andrew Regan is the 31-year-old who wants to take the Co-operative Wholesale Society, one of the most important movemeots in the British class struggle, into a new era. Yet while Tony Blair and progressive trade union leaders are heralded as "modernisers" for sweeping away the cobwebs of outdated features of British socialism, Mr Regan has become the new demon in the eyes of the Labour Party. More than 50 Labour MPs have called for his bid to take control of large parts of CWS to be blocked.

On closer inspectioo it is not difficult to see why Mr Regan is so despised by the Labour members, 15 of whom are sponsored by the Co-op. He appears as an embodiment of Thatcherism, described by one commentator as "the mutant son of Gordon Gekko", who has emerged from a deep-freeze after being kept in storage since the mid-1980s.

In fact, Mr Regan has speot the last 12 years in a frenzy of business activity since setting up his first company at the age of 19. Born into a business family he boasts that while his teenage peers were getting drunk and having fun, "the only thing I ever wanted to do was run a public company".

Leaving school at 17, he was encouraged by his father Roger, the chairman of the kitchens and bathrooms group Spring Ram, to set up a household cleaning products firm. Seven years later he used the business to take control of Hobson, a listed company.

Regan: Embodiment of Thatcherism, who has won over several financial backers

His interest in the Co-op appears to have had little to do with the principles on which the movement was founded.

Presiding over an impromptu board meeting which he called in a City wine bar, Regan decided on major expansion.

His partner Peter Hallett recalled: "We got together and said 'Right this is the pool of money we have got we can either go for a number of small acquisitions or we can go for a Big Bertha.'"

The CWS was identified as a "Big Bertha" takeover.

The language was rather different from that used when 28 flannel weavers formed the Rochdale Equitable Pioneers in 1840 to sell grain, sugar and butter at fair prices from the first Co-op shop.

The movement spread across Britain and at its peak had 11 millioo members in 2,000 societies.

The co-operative societies, along with the trade unions and other socialist bodies, set up the Independent Labour Party in 1893, and the movements have been intertwined ever since.

Ramsay MacDonald, the first Labour prime minister, insisted on Co-op products being delivered to 10 Downing Street.

This was the organisation which Regan wanted to take over. Wheo rumours first circulated of his £1bn bid to buy up the Co-op, not everyone took him seriously. He was depicted as a Don Quixote figure tilting his lance at a windmill. Yet the Co-op bosses, who denounced him as an "asset-stripping middleman", were not so scornful. After all Regan had already bought a chunk of CWS in 1994 and sold it for a personal profit of £2.7m.

Mr Regan, who lives in an elegant three-storey mansion in Kensington with his young wife and five children, is a fast, persuasive talker who has clearly won over several financial backers.

His charm may also have won him support from senior Co-op managers, two of whom were suspended oo Thursday for serious breach of trust.

Yesterday a High Court was not so impressed, ordering Mr Regan to return any confidential CWS information that may have come into his possession. The decision in effect headed off his takeover bid.

Rochdale experiment that began 150 years of co-operation

The Co-op began in 1844, when the Rochdale Pioneers, a group of 28 weavers, pooled their meagre savings and bought a grocery shop in Rochdale, Lancashire, for the grand sum of £28, writes Becky Lloyd.

Profits from the shop, which sold "wholesome food at reasonable prices", were shared between the group in proportion to the amount spent by each member. The idea quickly became popular elsewhere. By 1863 the various co-operative societies joined together to form their own wholesaling company. The Co-operative Insurance Society (CIS) was formed in 1867, and is now one of the country's leading insurers, serving 3.5 million families through a network of 7,000 representatives.

Co-op Society members in 1868 Photograph: Hulton Getty

The Co-operative Bank was formed in 1872.

The Co-operative Union, the umbrella organisation under which the different types of Co-operative are linked together, was formed in 1869 and is still the national co-ordinating body. Member societies send delegates to the Union's annual meeting.

The retail Movement now has a turnover in excess of £7.8bn, 68,000 staff and eight million members. The Movement, which offers everything from milk to funerals through its 4,600 outlets, can still claim to look after its members "from the cradle to the grave".

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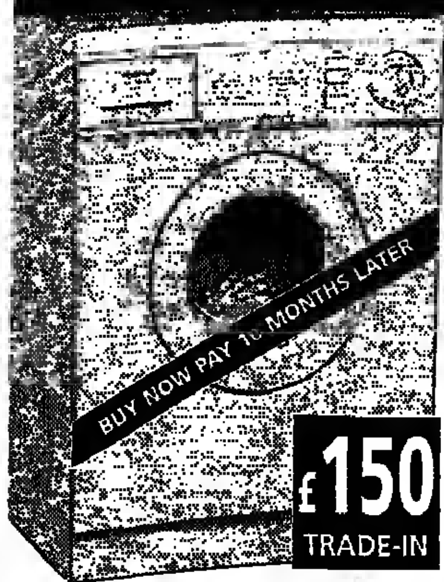

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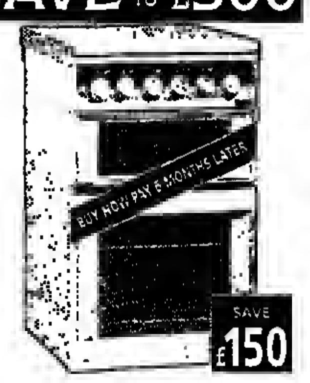

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Three get HIV from blood donation

Jeremy Laurance
Health Editor

New fears about the safety of blood were raised yesterday after the National Blood Service disclosed that three patients had been infected with HIV after receiving transfusions during hospital treatment.

The patients were infected by an HIV-positive donor whose contaminated blood escaped detection. One has since died of a condition unrelated to HIV. The others have been identified and offered counselling and support.

It is the first case of HIV infection in England since screening for the virus was introduced in 1985.

All blood donations are tested but there is a window of 20 to 30 days after infection before the virus can be detected.

The disclosure is a blow to the blood service which has suffered repeated shortages and is urgently seeking new donors.

Two years ago a batch of faulty blood bags resulted in two patients contracting septicaemia from infected blood. Hospitals use 10,000 units a day and demand is rising as more patients undergo surgery.

Angela Robinson, medical director of the service, said the case was tragic but extremely rare, the first in over 30 million donations made since 1985, although there was a similar case in Scotland in 1986. "No one else is at risk. Patients can be reassured that blood transfusion in this country is among the safest in the world," she said.

A single donation of the infected blood was made in the north-west of England last summer and divided into red cells, plasma and platelets, which were given separately to the three patients.

Because the donor had only been recently infected, the virus did not show up in routine testing but was still capable of being passed on.

The case came to light last month after one of the patients was found to be HIV-positive while undergoing further hospital treatment. Doctors traced all the blood donations the patient had received, and a special sensitive test, known as a PCR test, which detects the presence of antibodies, was carried out on the original sample taken from the donor. This revealed the presence of the virus. All samples taken from donors at the time they give blood are kept routinely for two years in case such backdated checks have to be made.

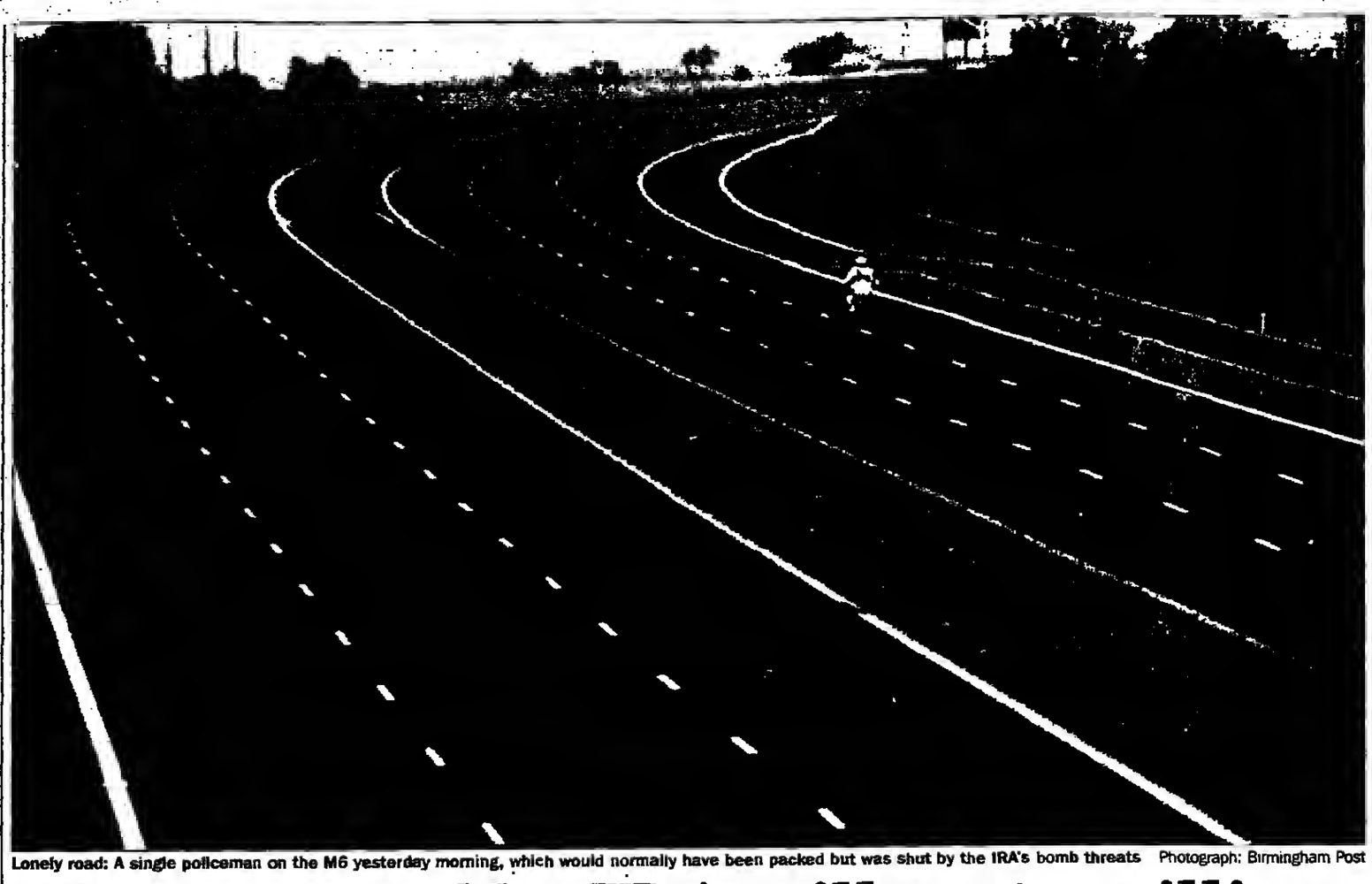
Donors are given a questionnaire about their lifestyle and sexual habits which the National Blood Service said should have eliminated anyone at risk of carrying the infection.

They are told they should never give blood if they are a man who has had sex with another man, injected drugs or worked as a prostitute. They should not give blood for a year after sex with a prostitute or after injecting drugs or for anyone of any race who has been sexually active in Africa.

A spokeswoman for the service said that the infected donor had been traced. "Either the donor did not know they were infected or they lied," she said.

Heat treatment is used to eliminate viruses present in blood products such as Factor VIII for haemophiliacs, but it cannot be used on whole blood because it would destroy it.

The spokeswoman said the more sensitive test for HIV, which is known as polymerase chain reaction (PCR), was not suitable for screening individual donations. She said the service had no plans to review its procedures.



Lonely road: A single policeman on the M6 yesterday morning, which would normally have been packed but was shut by the IRA's bomb threats Photograph: Birmingham Post

Chaos caused by IRA will costs millions

Jason Bennetto and Esther Leach

The cost of yesterday's chaos caused by the IRA bombs and alert will run into many millions of pounds in lost business and expenses incurred by the emergency services.

The two small explosions and a series of IRA coded warnings effectively severed the north of England and Scotland from the south and caused disruption for millions.

In a continuation of the IRA's tactic of maximum chaos with minimum risk, they targeted the key rail and road links in the Midlands and north of England.

Leeds, Doncaster, Crewe, and Stoke-on-Trent, were disrupted, along with two long stretches of the M6 – one in Staffordshire, the other north of Manchester. A series of warnings was issued at just after 7am, forcing the police and emergency services to evacuate the four citys' train stations, along with businesses and large areas of the town centres.

No-one was injured in the small blasts at Leeds and Doncaster, but by paralysing the stations, the rail network running between the north and south was effectively disabled.

Huge queues built up on the M6 and the area was still busy even after the closed sections were re-opened again around 1.30pm. But the rail stations remained shut late into yesterday evening – causing havoc to both west coast and east coast train services.

One of the areas worst hit was Leeds. The emergency began with an uncoded message to the city's General Infirmary at 7.14am. Within minutes, police officers were sent to the railway station to carry out a search for an explosive device.

But it was at least another one-and-a-half hours before the station was evacuated, just as an explosion was heard. There was a loud thud and a pall of smoke rose at the west end of the station. It happened either in or close to a cabinet housing high voltage electrical equipment.

No injuries were reported, but there was large-scale disruption to the train services and surrounding roads were blocked off and car parks closed stranding hundreds of cars.

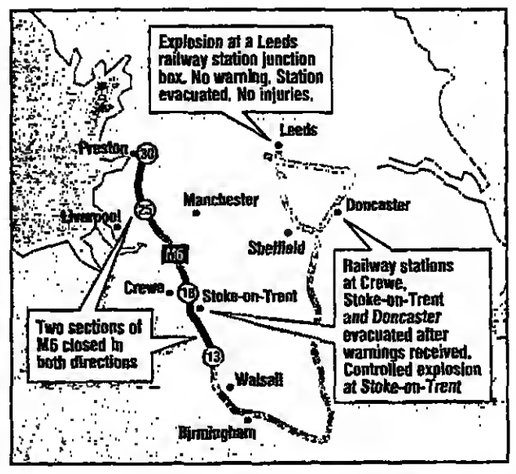
Buildings, including offices, shops and hotels within a quarter of a mile radius of the station were evacuated.

By lunchtime the city was beginning to return to normal, although the train station remained closed.

Similar problems were experienced in the other three towns. The second explosion took place on a road bridge in Doncaster, but again no-one was hurt.

The Freight Transport Association underlined the economic toll dealt by the terrorists' blocking industry's arterial routes, estimating that up to 40,000 heavy goods vehicles a day use the sections of the M6 closed in the latest alert – costing around £1.2 million an hour.

On the railways, the FTA said that around 100 freight trains a day would normally run through the Crewe and Doncaster areas affected by yesterday's incidents.



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news

Affronted Tusa sweeps away the Baroness's muses

David Lister
Arts News Editor

John Tusa, the head of the Barbican Ceotre, is to remove his predecessor's garish pride and joy – the nine Muses which sit above the glazed canopy at the Barbican's entrance.

Mr Tusa's office overlooks the Muses' backsides. And he is understood to be so enraged by having to view the much criticised statues every working day that he has ordered their removal.

The 8ft tall statues, modelled in clay, cast in resin and theo gilded, were commissiooed by Baroness Detta O'Cathain, then chief executive of the Barbican, in 1993 as part of a £9m refurbishmeot plan. They were meant to symbolise the inspirational qualities of the arts.

They were designed by the late Theo Crosby for the design consultants Peotagram, and sculpted by Bernard Sindall

When Baroness O'Cathain fell out with the City of Loodon Corporation, which owns and fioances the Barbican, Mr Tusa, former head of the BBC World Service, was appointed to replace her.

On his appoiotment he received an opeo letter from a former artistic director of the centre Humphrey Burton, advising him: "The first thing you should do when you get there is to remove the tatty, gold-plated, big-hreasted statues representing the nine Muses which are placed oo the canopy outside your window above the entrance. Offer them to the City Rifle Club for Sunday morning target practice."

In fact he needed no such urging. He has long disliked his daily visual inspiration.

Wheo his office was asked about his intentions earlier in the week it was denied that there were any immediate plans to remove the Muses. However, yesterday a Barbican spokeswoman said they would indeed he going.

She said: "The nine muses were a geouine attempt as part of the Pentagram refurbishmeot project to create a warmer, more inviting entrance to the Ceotre. However, there is an overwhelming consensus that the Muses have oot succeeded in their objective of creating a set of symbols that sum up the spirit of what we and our artistic partners are doing here. We have therefore decided to remove them."

It is understood the muses will be dismantled within the oext week, and placed in the City of Loodon Corporation stores as disposable assets. The corporation refused to make any official comment.

Last days: The muses posing above the entrance to the Barbican Centre in the City of London, where they have offended John Tusa

Photograph: Mykel Nicolaou

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Cut-price ecstasy flooding market

Jason Bennetto
Crime Correspondent

A cut-price version of ecstasy is among three new drugs to have hit the festival and dance markets causing concern that greater numbers of young people will be tempted to experiment with illegal substances.

The new drug, known as 2CB, costs as little as £3 for a four-hour "trip" - a quarter of the price of ecstasy. Drug workers have also reported an influx of "bliss" and DMT, or "businessman's lunch".

2CB will be of greatest concern hecause of its low cost and the fact that drug users are taking it as an alternative or additiooal stimulant to ecstasy. The use of the latter has caused great controversy following a small oumber of high-profile deaths, such as that of Leah Betts, who died in 1995 after taking it at her 18th birthday. Although its popularity has waned in the past few years, up to 500,000 doses are still consumed every weekend.

2CB, also known as "nexus", "spectrum" or "bromo", is related to ecstasy and is becoming increasingly popular at festivals and outdoor raves. Costing £3 or £4 the hallucinogen, which is usually a white or pink tablet, heightens the user's visual imagery, body awareness and tactile sensitivity. It is ofteo sold at raves in "party packs" with a ecstasy tablet. Taken half an hour after the ecstasy the 2CB gives extra hallucinogenic effects.

The side-effects of this oew drug are unknown but there are fears of could long-term psychological damage. It is believed to be made in Britain, although most of it is almost certainly brought over from Europe.

Gary Woolvett, drugs worker for the natiooal drug and legal help line Release, said: "We have seen a gradual increase in the use of 2CB ... particularly at festivals and outside eveots rather than in clubs."

Another newcomer on the drugs market is the ultra-strong DMT, which stands for dimethyltriptamine. It is a naturally occurring component of several plants found in the West Indies and South America, and has been used in snuff by South American Indians for centuries.

The modern DMT is chemically manufactured and costs £15 for a wrap. The powder is usually smoked with tohacco and has an immediate effect, increasing the heart rate and blood pressure. The powerful hallucinogenic effects last for about 30 minutes - hence its street name "businessman's lunch". The side effects include anxiety, panic and psychological problems.

The third substance is bliss, a form of the hallucinogenic LSD. It costs about £3 for a tab, which is usually impregnated on blotting paper, and the effects last for four to eight hours. Drug agencies have noted its availability in Brightoo and Bristol in the past six months. The side-effects are unknown.

Shops deny BSE profiteering

Glenda Cooper
Consumer Affairs Correspondent

A row broke out yesterday as farmers claimed that they had seen the price of beef drop sharply since the BSE crisis, while supermarkets and butchers were keeping prices high.

But retailers immediately denied this, saying that their profit margins had been hit hard and that prices had come down to attract customers who had been made wary of beef.

Jim Watson, past president of the Livestock Auctiooeers' Association and chairman of Midland Marts, said that the average price farmers could sell carcasses for had dropped from £1 a kilo last March before the BSE crisis, to 70-75p now. For a live animal, whose average weight was 600 kilos the average market price per kilo was now 90p compared to £1.20 18 months ago.

"It is not a level playing field and farmers are making very, very substantial losses," said Mr Watson. "Supermarkets and butchers' shops have stayed at the same prices they were charging eighteen months ago. Prices in the shops have oot gone down anything like they have come down in the market. If the farmers want to stay in business they have to go on producing meat for a good return. They doo't like to see their animals losing money while someone is making a lot of profit."

But Duncan Sinclair, economics policy analyst at the Meat and Livestock Commission, said: "Retail prices in terms of changing are slower to change than producer prices. They don't move up and down so much."

And a spokeswoman for Sainsbury's said the supermarket was not making any more profit on beef: "Since BSE we can't use as much of the cow under the new rules, aod so because we can use less of it we are paying less ... we are not making any extra profit."

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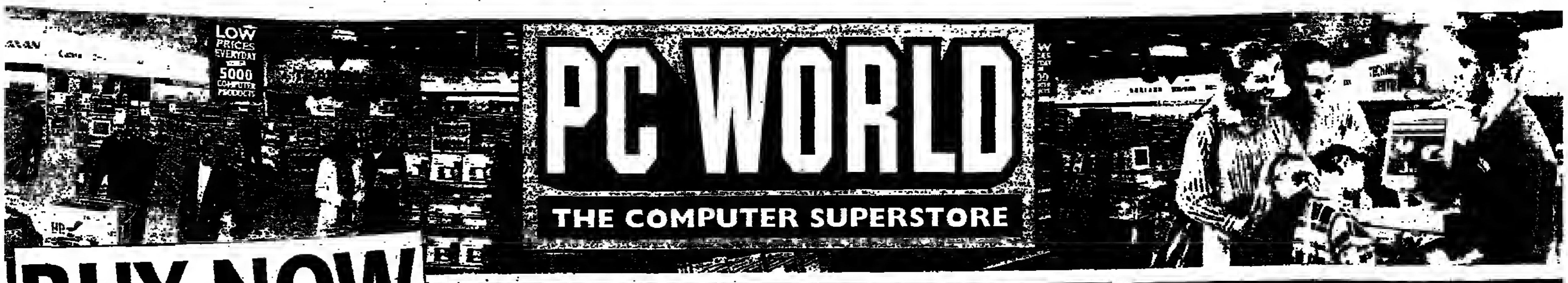

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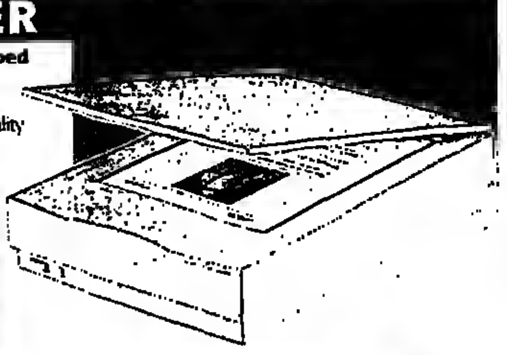

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news

Street drama: A dying foal knocked down by a car in Bishop Auckland vainly struggling to get to its legs as children and a police officer look on, powerless to help Photographs:Nigel Whitfield; *Northern Echo*

Urban curse of the four-legged friend

Michael Streeter

Fnr many residents they are a dangerous nuisance, for the owners a way of life. The growing prohlem of urban horses and ponies is the symbol nf a culture clash between expanding populations and the desire of many to keep in touch with rural traditions.

Nowhere is this clash stronger than in Bishop Auckland, Co Durham, where in recent weeks two horses have been killed or had to be put down after collisions with cars.

Eighteen mnnths ago an eight-week old baby was hitten by a horse which forced its way through a garden fence, and there are numerous stories of the animals roaming through private gardens, along busy bypasses and even being raced up high streets.

The problem is now so serious that Wear Valley district council is studying new legislation passed in Dublin, where the phenomenon of urban ponies was featured in the film *The Commitments*.

Councillor Sonny Douthwaite, who is trying to find a solution, fears more injuries. "I'm angry about the loose horses on the road, which are an accident waiting to happen. It's an ever-growing problem." Like many, he recognises the cultural history of people owning horses while living in homes with little or no land. Some inherited the tradition as "residential" travellers, while others simply see it as a pastime."

For some people it's a hobby, like I keep racing pigeons," said Mr Douthwaite. "In the past I've even seen horse's heads sticking out of bedroom windows."

Now the horses – perhaps more than fifty in the area – can be seen grazing on football pitches, scraps of land and in areas in the middle of busy residential housing estates.

Melanie Atkinson recalled how her son Dexter, then eight weeks old, was bitten on the hand when a pony ded to her garden fence outside hroke through. "My daughter looked out and said, 'the baby dead'. She had seen hnnd in the horse's mouth." Ms Atkinson added: "I was petrified and I am now terrified of horses. The police came but said they could do nothing, as they could not trace the owner." She was also warned not to complain about the incident in a town were some nf the owners are feared. Inspector Edgar, of the local police, agreed that to try to find some owners was like "finding needles in a haystack. We are seeing more and more horses on the road and with more traffic the likelihood of serious or fatal accidents is increasing."

> ‘Nothing will be done until someone gets killed in an accident’

One prohlem is that current laws, including the 1980 Highway Act, are inadequate in dealing with the impounding of loose horses. Local authorities employ a horse catcher but often by the time he arrives the horses have gone. A mooted solution is to create a designated horse impound, on the model nf a car impound and charge owners £100 or more to retrieve their animals. Another is to find authority land where the horses, normally kept as pets, can be safely tethered. However, this approach has already foundered in St Helen Auckland, where residents objected to having the ponies imposed on them.

Some animal-welfare experts believe the growth in horse numbers comes from the decline in European markets for UK horse meat, to which some animals were sent, because of the BSE scare. There is also concern over ill-treatment of horses after an incident in which an owner kicked and dragged a dying pony after a car hit it.

Martin Taggart, director of welfare of the British Horse Society, believes the key is to ensure owners respect their animals. "This is a fester over the whole North-east area and is something we take extremely seriously. We want to encourage responsible horse ownership." Karl Metcalfe, whose father keeps horses, said the answer was to keep them as they did on rented farmland and keep proper control. "They don't need to be on the streets." Another resident summed up their fears: "Nothing will be done until someone gets killed in an accident."

Irish plagued with cavalry of wild horses

By July exclusive new powers will enable councils across the Irish Republic to crack the whip against urban cavalries of loose horses that terrify motorists by crashing through windscreens or charging into toddlers at play.

The measures, being examined by local authorities in the North-east of England, include compulsory licensing and registration and microchip tagging.

Owners will be charged for impounded horses and wandering ponies seized a number of times may be sold or put down. A key change will be banning children under 16 from buying or owning horses.

Though city horses evoke images of devil-may-care adolescents and quirky scenes of pie-bald nags grazing on front lawns such as seen in *The Commitments* and the children's film adventure *Into the West*, the reality is often less comical.

Today "loose horses" wandering on main Dublin roads are a regular feature on traffic bulletins. The city's horse population has been estimated at close to 5,000.

The need for the new laws was driven by public anger at a series of horrific incidents in recent years. Several road accidents were caused by collisions, often at night, involving unattended animals.

Thursday saw the latest in a series of frightening accidents caused by ponies running into toddlers when a child suffered serious injuries after being dragged for 20 yards by a horse in Clondalkin in south-west Dublin.

Previous incidents have seen toddlers being kicked in the face.

The new laws were passed by the Dail in the New Year and will be enacted in the coming weeks. They will apply to urban centres rather than rural areas, so stud farms and working farm horses will not be affected.

Despite the clampdown, some claim benefits in city children learning about horses and in Dublin, experiments with stables in working-class areas have offered an alternative to the chaos of wandering ponies.

Alan Murdoch

Pension change drives out head teachers

Judith Judd
Education Editor

An unprecedented exodus of headteachers has been triggered by the Government's changes to teachers' pension arrangements. Vacancies for heads are at record levels – up almost a third on the same time last year – and advertisements for primary heads are up by more than a half.

Under the new pension rules, to be introduced in September, the main responsibility for pension payments will be shifted from the Treasury to hard-pressed local authorities.

Ministers originally proposed to bring in the changes from April but backed down under pressure from teachers' unions. Critics warned that the postponement would mean even more teachers flocked to retirement. The resignation crisis is most noticeable among primary heads.

David Hart, general secretary of the National Association of Head Teachers, said the new government would need immediately to tackle the problem. "It is the culmination of persistent attacks on the teaching profession. Heads don't feel they get the recognition they deserve," he said. "The politicians are talking about how to improve teachers' status by means other than pay and conditions but it is improved pay and conditions that will stop the exodus of heads."

Yesterday's *Times Educational Supplement*, the teachers' trade paper, contained advertisements for 175 primary heads. Last week the figure was 168. The total for the same two weeks last year was 199.

Mr Hart said the number of acting heads was at an all-time record because schools cannot find suitable candidates for headships.

A spokesman for the Local Government Management Board, the teachers' employers organisation, said: "Schools have to do a balancing act between getting another classroom teacher, paying the head more and buying more books."

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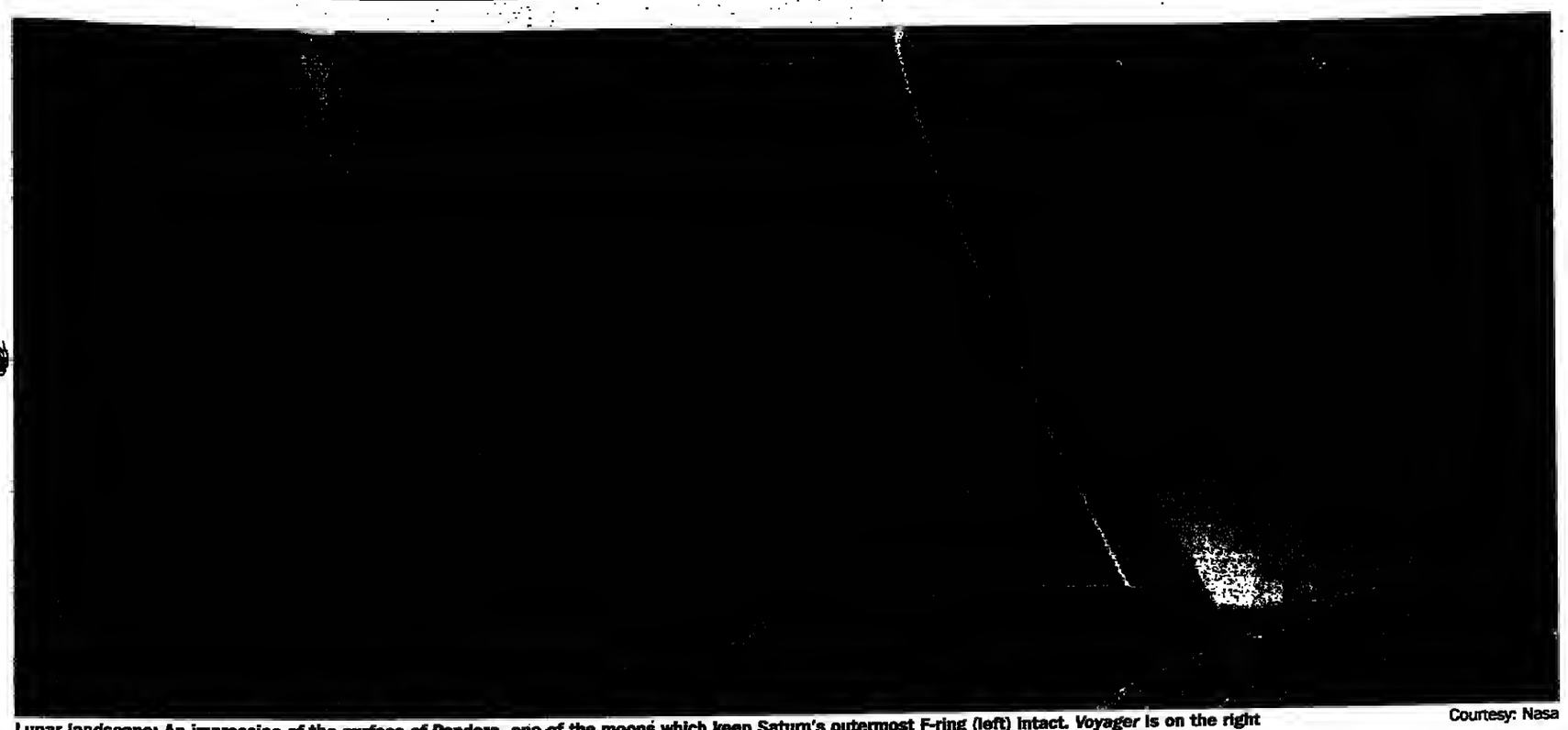

Lunar landscape: An impression of the surface of Pandora, one of the moons which keep Saturn's outermost F-ring (left) intact. *Voyager* is on the right

Courtesy: Nasa

Astronomers run rings round Saturn

Charles Arthur
Science Editor

This is how the the sky might look from within one of Saturn's most unusual rings, the sixth and outermost "F-ring".

Astronomers at Queen Mary & Westfield College in London have analysed data from the *Voyager* spacecraft and found that the F-ring consists of not one, but four interwoven strands of dust and ice. It also exhibits strange phenomena, such as "kinks" in the tidy lines, as well as clumps and braids – unlike the other rings.

The scientists now reckon that the F-ring is kept together by an unknown number of "shepherding moons" about a kilometre in diameter which orbit near and even within it. Otherwise, the ring would be broken up by the intrusion of the moon Prometheus – whose elliptical orbit brings it into the ring every 19 years, causing huge disruption. It is believed the small moons cause the "kinks".

Astronomers remain perplexed by the F-ring, because it is also the thickest. One of the main purposes of the *Cassini* craft, to be launched this October, will be to unravel more of its secrets. Kevin Beurle of QMW said: "It's incredibly complex, so we want to know more. It really is very strange."

77 years for gang who raped tourist

Seven teenagers who gang-raped an Austrian tourist before hurling her naked into a canal to swim for her life were sentenced to a total of 77 years' detention at the Old Bailey yesterday.

The Recorder of London, Sir Lawrence Verney QC, sentenced five teenagers to 11 years, one to 10 years and another to 12 years.

None of the boys showed any emotion as the sentence was passed, but there were sobs from the public gallery which was packed with members of their families.

Walk into terror: The gang's tourist victim

The judge lifted an order banning identification of four of the teenagers, but retained it in relation to three of them.

Those who can now be named are Filipino-born brothers Eduardo Agum, 16, and Allan Agum, 15, of Clapton Square, Hackney, east London; Cesar Cardenas, 15, of Holsworthy Square, Elm Street, Clerkenwell and Nicholas Mavrides, 16, of Rowstock Gardens, Camden, north London.

An eighth member of the gang – the 14-year-old "ringleader" who is 6ft 2in tall – was not before the court today. The boy, who is one of those who cannot be named, is to be sentenced later once reports on him are completed.

The judge told the gang: "This case of rape is as horrifying and revolting as any could be."

The court heard how the gang was aged between 14 and 17 when they "violently and repeatedly" raped the 32-year-old tourist, a mother of two who cannot be named for legal reasons, while she was on holiday in London.

She was kicked, punched, and subjected to a multiple rape ordeal and other "sexual indignities" during an hour-long ordeal after going for a midnight stroll from her hotel in King's Cross.

Seven of the eight pleaded guilty to rape. Allan Agum, the smallest of the gang at just 4ft 11in, denied the charge, but was convicted last week by an Old Bailey jury.

The victim was not in court, but her husband sat in the public gallery.

Despite showing no emotion during the sentencing, it emerged later that the youths broke down in tears after being taken down to the cells.

Passing sentence, Sir Lawrence said of the case: "It contains aggravating features of exceptional wickedness, which merit exceptional sentences that combine punishment with a clear warning to any others who may contemplate similar conduct."

The judge continued: "You showed no mercy to the victim; your physical maturity enabled you to inflict great suffering upon her; but the court is obliged to take account of your ages and does so in fixing the sentences in this instance."

Sir Lawrence then added: "Because one of you contested the charge, the court has head the victim gave evidence and describe her appalling experience.

"No-one who has listened to her account is ever likely to forget it."

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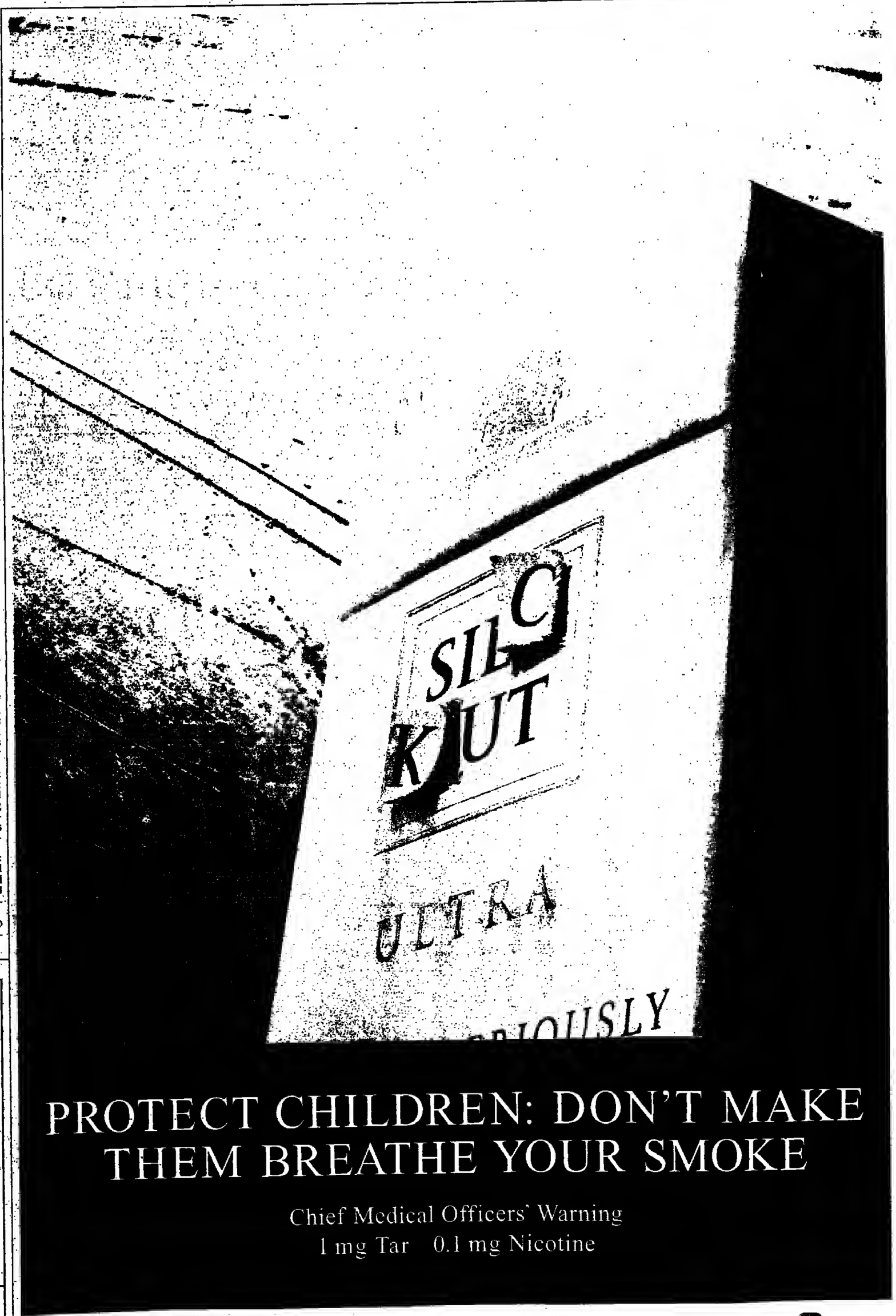


Let MPs vote on Euro job laws, Major urges Blair

PM's challenge assumes a Labour election win

Anthony Bevins
Political Editor

John Major yesterday challenged Tony Blair to put the European Social Chapter through the British Parliament, if Labour wins the election on 1 May. The challenge was curious because it suggested a belief that Mr Blair could well become Prime Minister.

But, most significantly, Mr Major was also urging the Labour leader to do something the Conservatives have never done themselves; retaining the sovereignty of the Westminster Parliament over European legislation.

Under the treaties of the European Union, European law is mainly initiated by the Brussels machinery, and once it is sanctioned by the Council of Ministers, it becomes supreme law – even to the point of over-riding existing Westminster statute.

The Conservative leader told his daily election press conference yesterday that the danger of the European Social Chapter favoured by Labour was that it would import high European unemployment into Britain, and that once Mr Blair had signed up to it, it would then be locked in for good.

Issuing his challenge to Mr Blair, the Prime Minister then added: "If he thinks it is right to go down the route of the Social Chapter and the Employment Chapter, and all this nonsense he talks about, which will damage our prosperity and our jobs, I make this challenge – Put it through the British Parliament if you are to win the general election.

"The British people can then repeal it, so the British nation can then decide whether it's right, and if it fails the British Parliament can then repeal it.

"Put it through Europe, where it will not have proper debate, where it will have damaging effects on British interests, and it could not be repealed.

"For what credible reason will he not put these vital measures through the British Parliament? If he believes in them, I believe that is what he should do, and I challenge him to say why he will not do it."

Mr Major was asked by *The Independent* why he had not put European legislation through the British Parliament in the same way, but he did not reply.

In fact, Mr Major's government has even been criticised by the all-party Commons Committee on European Legislation for allowing law to be pushed through the Brussels machine – with the blessing of Mr Major's ministerial colleagues – without MPs being provided with up-to-date drafts in English.

Mr Major said on BBC television *Question Time* on Thursday night that the Social Chapter "hasn't got much in it at the moment, quite frankly."

But he warned: "It would open up the possibility of all sorts of elements of the European social model being legislated for in Britain by Qualified Majority Vote, but imposed upon British business, adding to their costs and costing us British jobs."

Opening the press conference, Mr Major – for the third day running – put Europe at the top of his agenda, suggesting that the Conservative campaign considers there are net electoral gains to be made from the issue.

In a statement, Mr Major warned that European and British trade unionists were proposing to use European law to give power back to the unions "through Labour's sell-out" to Europe.

"If Labour won, the British government would have to negotiate every new employment law with the European trades unions.

"And British companies – perhaps as small as 50 employees – would have to agree how they ran their business with a union representative on their new works council.

"It might not be beer and sandwiches. More like beer and baguettes. But the danger would be just as great."

Thatcher's 'no' vote

Baroness Thatcher ignored John Major's appeals for the Tory party to rally round the Government on the euro.

When asked on a visit to an electronics company in Maldon, Essex, whether Britain should join a single currency, there came the vintage Thatcher response: "I invented the answer – No. No. No.

"It is like I have been saying to the candidates, are you trying to become a member of Parliament only to hand over the powers of Parliament to Brussels, a non-elected bureaucracy? ... There is now nearly a single currency ... the dollar. It's not a single currency, it's a common currency."

Cheers: The Prime Minister raises his glass during a visit to the new Bolton Wanderers soccer stadium yesterday Photograph: Russell Boyce

Settling immortality's accounts

Peter Popham

As they sift the relics of the last years of the 20th century, archaeologists will be bewildered by the number of plaques, stones, memorials and markers bearing the name John Major and dated in April 1997.

On Wednesday he and Lady Thatcher unveiled a plaque on a building completed long ago. Yesterday Mr Major laid a stone in the wall of a stadium is months away from getting a roof, and as yet unnamed.

Like yesterday's sudden eruption of ennoblement, this flurry of setting and unveiling and commemorating is an understandable impulse, a final fling at the levers of power and immortality while they are still within his reach. The only plausible explanation for the Prime Minister's persistently sunny demeanour during the campaign is that he is already demob happy. In this mood he ranges the country, leaving his mark of ownership on every lamp post. For the one unchallengeable advantage the Tories have over Labour is that they have been in power for 18 years. Whatever has been done, has been done under them.

The nameless stadium, provisionally known as "Reebok", will be the new home for Bolton Wanderers, the phoenix of Northern football. Established in 1874 and a founding member of the Football League, it spent years in the doldrums but has bounded back this year. Completion of the stadium later this year will clinch a glorious spell for the club, whatever they decide to call it. Everything Mr Major goes near these days is the biggest, the best, the most something or other in Europe. "Reebok" is boasted to be Europe's most expensive new football stadium. It will not, however, bankrupt the club, because it is lavishly set about with retail units, leisure facilities, a multiplex cinema, housing and even factories. Four miles out of Bolton's original centre, it is the snake sloughing its Victorian skin and starting over. Fans of the Trotters, as the club is known, come out and sit on benches here just to watch the stadium being built.

It's a relief and a surprise to find a new Tory structure that is not dotted with weathercocks and finished to look like a child-size Tudor manor house. "Reebok" is a heroic structure, with massive steel masts and curving roof members and no discernible reference to any period earlier than the 20th century. In its present state it looks like a giant game of cat's cradle. But of course it's not really a Tory structure at all, having been developed by an alliance of the football club and the Labour-controlled council with a developer. So MR Major's hijacking of it was a cheek, though one connived at by the club itself.

As photo opportunities go, it was particularly futile, as Mr Major could not even bring himself to kick a ball, let alone engage in a bout of heading with the legendary Nat Lofthouse, Bolton's president and still the club's highest goal-scorer, the man who sealed the 1953 FA Cup victory by shoving the Manchester United goalkeeper over the line (or so it was alleged). Tony Blair's brilliant career in the popularity ratings, reporters recalled, can be dated to his heading bout with Kevin Keegan. Might not Mr Major have pulled off a similar coup? Possibly, but he wasn't going to chance it.

Tories take cash bait from millionaire foe of EMU

Sykes predicts most candidates will accept his aid to stop march of federalism

Christian Wolmar

Paul Sykes, the multi-millionaire who is funding Tory candidates opposed to the single currency, predicted yesterday that all but around 30 of those eligible will take up his offer of support.

Mr Sykes is giving between £1,000 and £3,000 to the constituency associations of MPs who say they are opposed to a single currency in their election addresses.

He is only giving money to the associations of the 344 seats where Tories won last time and he says that by last night 230 had accepted his offer. "With around 80 ministers who have to follow the party line, that leaves fewer than 30 MPs and candidates who agree with the wait and see policy," he said. "I am doing this out of love for my countrymen. I think ordinary people are having a rotten deal."

The miner's son from Barnsley who made a fortune in various businesses, including selling second hand buses, property and now information technology, regrets having stood down as Conservative candidate in the town over concerns that he would divided the party on Europe.

He said: "It is clear that nearly all MPs agree with me that we should rule out a single currency and rule it out now. It is a project being pushed forward by bureaucrats and technocrats, and politicians are just being dragged along.

Mr Sykes is a self-made man who in his youth was a socialist but he became disillusioned by the culture created by dependency on the state: "My mother saved up to get a new door and fireplace on her council house. But when the local councillor, Comrade so-and-so, saw the door, the council made her take it off because it was different from the others. They let her keep the fireplace, though."

He left school at 15 and took a job as a bottle packer but found that he wasn't allowed to work overtime because of union rules. This led him to cross the political divide.

His first business was selling old buses to Third World countries and he became a millionaire by the age of 24. He is now 53 and worth "at least three figures" of millions.

Mr Sykes says his gesture in supporting candidates is to help stimulate debate in the party, and not to try to buy favours: "They haven't changed their stance because of my money. They know the feeling of people they are meeting out there and they know ordinary people do not want a federal Europe. All debate is being stifled. Maastricht was a rotten deal."

Despite being a businessman in a sphere which is international, Mr Sykes has absolutely no truck with the arguments in favour of a single currency. "The single currency is not just about going abroad without having to change money. It's about creating a federal Europe. Chancellor Kohl is quite straight about that. There is no example in the world where you have a sovereign country which doesn't have its own currency. Commons sense tells you that it will ultimately become a single country."

He is not, however, anti-Europe: "Germany is one of the biggest investors here. I want free trade, not a federal Europe."

Mr Sykes, who retains his strong Yorkshire accent and a typically blunt view of the world, lives in a 17th-century manor house in North Yorkshire with his wife and the two youngest of his children. He says he will not pass on any of his wealth to them: "I am not going to leave them any money. I don't want to ruin their lives."

Sykes: 'I am doing this out of love for my countrymen'

THE HURRIED VOTER'S GUIDE

THE CAMPAIGN

While John Major returned, for the third consecutive day, to Europe, Labour and the Liberal Democrats preferred to concentrate on law and order; one of the issues that many voters say they are very concerned about.

At the first press conference of the day, Alan Beith, the Liberal Democrats' home affairs spokesman, proposed measures to combat juvenile crime. The package included developing schemes to identify disruptive children at an early stage, a national truancy watch scheme, and the establishment of a voluntary citizen's service for young people; providing up to two years' community service.

Jack Straw, Labour's spokesman, proposed swift action to reform the Crown Prosecution Service, with an independent review of structures, policies and procedures to be completed within a year of the party taking office.

Labour is proposing a chief crown prosecutor, a sort of US-style district attorney, for each police force area in the country, to help reverse "the steady decline in the number of convictions since the 1980s". But Michael Howard said "Jack Straw clearly does not understand the changes we have already made to de-centralise the CPS", adding that only the Conservatives would take the tough measures needed on crime.

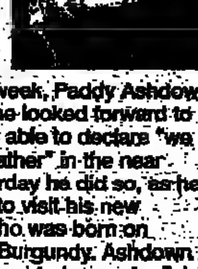
KEY ARGUMENTS

Gordon Brown, the shadow Chancellor, again attacked the Liberal Democrats' tax-and-spend policies – a reflection of the frustration Labour is feeling with the "chattering class" perception that Paddy Ashdown and his party represent a new radicalism. He also said that yesterday's Conservative advert depicting Tony Blair as a puppet on Chancellor Kohl's knee was an act of "desperation".

The Liberal Democrats supported the idea of tactical voting to try and oust the Conservatives, with campaign manager Lord Holme saying: "We as Liberal Democrats always had the quandary of the British voting system, and within these constraints we want people to cast an effective vote. There is no doubt for many people in many constituencies their overriding wish is to get rid of this shambolic government."

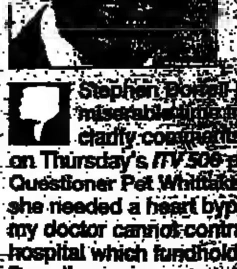
John Major's argument on Europe was an echo of Margaret Thatcher's famous Bruges speech from the late 1980s. She said she had not rolled back the frontiers of the state, to have socialism return through the back door of Brussels; Mr Major said the trades unions were poised to use Europe as a route to return to their old ways.

GOOD DAY



Last week, Paddy Ashdown said he looked forward to being able to declare "we are a grandfather" in the near future. Yesterday he did so, as he made plans to visit his new grandson, who was born on Thursday in Burgundy. Ashdown is going to France today, and relished such a good reason to be able to step off the campaign trail: "I will be scampering off there as fast as I can, and it's going to be a private visit," he said.

BAD DAY



Stephen Dorrell [illegible] miserable [illegible] clarify comments [illegible] on Thursday's *ITV 500* programme. Questioner Pet Whittaker had said she needed a heart bypass: my doctor cannot contract the hospital which fundholders can. Dorrell recommended: "go and register with a fundholder." Dorrell yesterday protested that he was only speaking up for patient choice, but Mrs Whittaker later expressed a desire to "smack him in the mouth".

ONE TO REMEMBER

14 year-old "Tory Boy" Thomas Goodhead launched headlong into the world of politics yesterday morning, phoning the BBC Radio 4's *Election Call* programme to berate John Prescott. He accused Labour of abandoning its principles to get votes. Although a descendant of Aneurin Bevan, he added that his aim was to go "right to the top" of the Tory party, emulating the success of William Hague who spoke as a teenager at a party conference.

HOGWASH

Michael Heseltine: "John Major is the man who has actually got the economy that is the envy of the European Union ... this guy has presided over it in a way that ought to be a matter of huge public acclaim as opposed to a daily feeding fever by the media". Major also described the trials of EU negotiation, saying of Chancellor Kohl: "I've sat around the table with him, I've watched him do it. He's a doughty fighter, a tough fighter".

THE OTHER PARTIES

The Green Party declared a campaign of direct action against the BBC after a leaked memo showed programme makers had been ordered to give it minimal coverage. Spokesman Peter Barnett said the BBC saw the Greens as a party for "woolly hats, sandals and beards." Meanwhile anti-racist groups condemned the BBC for approving a BNP party election broadcast which advocates the repatriation of non-whites, and capital punishment. Lee Jasper, of the National Black Alliance said: "taxpayers' money is going to be used to resource a race hate campaign against black British citizens."

MEDIA STAR

Chancellor Helmut Kohl of Germany featured prominently in the media yesterday, thanks to a Conservative advertisement which showed him controlling a ventriloquist's dummy in the shape of Tony Blair. "It is unfair to bring the German Chancellor into the British election campaign like this," said Peter Hintze, general secretary of Kohl's CDU party. "Even allowing for the special nature of the British sense of humour, I don't think it's fair play".

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Tories fishing for votes in the Algarve

John Rentoul on wooing the expatriates

Maybe this is what the 56 per cent of Britons who are bored by the election campaign should have done. Members of Conservatives Abroad in the Algarve, in Portugal, have arranged for party workers in Britain to cast proxy votes on their behalf, while they watch the election results on a large-screen television at an all-night party at the Hotel Garbe. "Running finger buffet and pay bar, 2,500 Escudos [£9] per person," says the invitation.

But Tory expatriate election-night parties seem likely to be overshadowed by Labour celebrations in such unlikely places as Hollywood, Cyprus, South Africa and Australia. The New York Labour branch is holding a champagne party in the trendy SoHo brasserie, Pravda.

The Tory plan to mobilise two million potential voters abroad has fizzled out, according to figures released by the Office for National Statistics.

A total of only 23,583 expats have registered for the election – an average of just 36 in each constituency. Even if, as Labour used to fear, expats are overwhelmingly right-leaning in their politics, they are unlikely to tip the result even in a single constituency. Only the Tory-held Vale of Glamorgan was decided by a margin smaller than this (19 votes) at the last election.

Labour has repeatedly accused the Government of changing the law for party political advantage. The law was first changed in 1985 to allow UK citizens living abroad to vote in British parliamentary and European elections. Conservatives Abroad was formed the following year, and now claims 4,000 members in 49 branches around the world, including 13 in Spain and four in Portugal.

The law was amended in 1989 to include those who had left the country up to 20 years ago, rather than 10 years. And it was changed again last year, to give expats a tax incentive to register to vote. Registering can no longer be used by the Inland Revenue as one of the factors to decide domicile for tax purposes. Expats who are "domiciled" in Britain have to pay inheritance tax on their worldwide assets when they die. The move, condemned by Labour as "a blatant tax bribe", proved unsuccessful in encouraging more expats to register.

Malcolm Dumper, elections officer for Southampton city council, said: "Overseas registrations have gone down in recent years."

UK citizens living abroad may not vote by post, but can appoint a "proxy" to vote on their behalf in the constituency in which they last lived, and all the main parties offer to find party workers who can fulfil this function.

Art Malik, the Labour-supporting actor, says: "The largest expat community in the world is in Santa Monica. It is full of people who say that if Labour gets in, they're not going back. You just look at them and say: 'But the Conservatives are in and you're not there!' "

Wave of support: Tory voters in the Algarve, Portugal, will watch the election results on a large-screen television at the Hotel Garbe, having arranged for party workers to cast their votes by proxy. Conservatives Abroad now claims 4,000 members in 49 branches Photograph: Peter Jay

Goldsmith loses broadcast plea

The Referendum Party yesterday failed in a High Court attempt to win more party political broadcasts in the run-up to the general election.

Two judges rejected accusations by multi-millionaire Sir James Goldsmith's party that it had been "unfairly and unlawfully" limited to one five-minute broadcast.

They dismissed applications for judicial review brought against the BBC and the Independent Television Commission, which had upheld ITV's decision not to allocate more air time.

Lord Justice Auld, sitting with Mr Justice Popplewell, said: "For reasons that we shall give in reserved jodgments next week, both of these applications are refused."

Asked if there would be an appeal, a Referendum Party spokesman said: "We are naturally disappointed, but we will consider the judges' reasons and then discuss with our legal advisers the next stage."

Anne Sloman, the BBC's chief political adviser said: "We are absolutely delighted that in reaching their judgment their lordships acknowledged that our decision-making process was entirely proper and fair."

During the one-day hearing, Geoffrey Robertson QC, for the Referendum Party, argued it was a serious contender in the race to form the next Government. It was fielding 547 candidates, yet the three main parties had been given up to 10 *times* as much air time.

BLAIR ON LAW & ORDER SO RIGHT HE'S WRONG?

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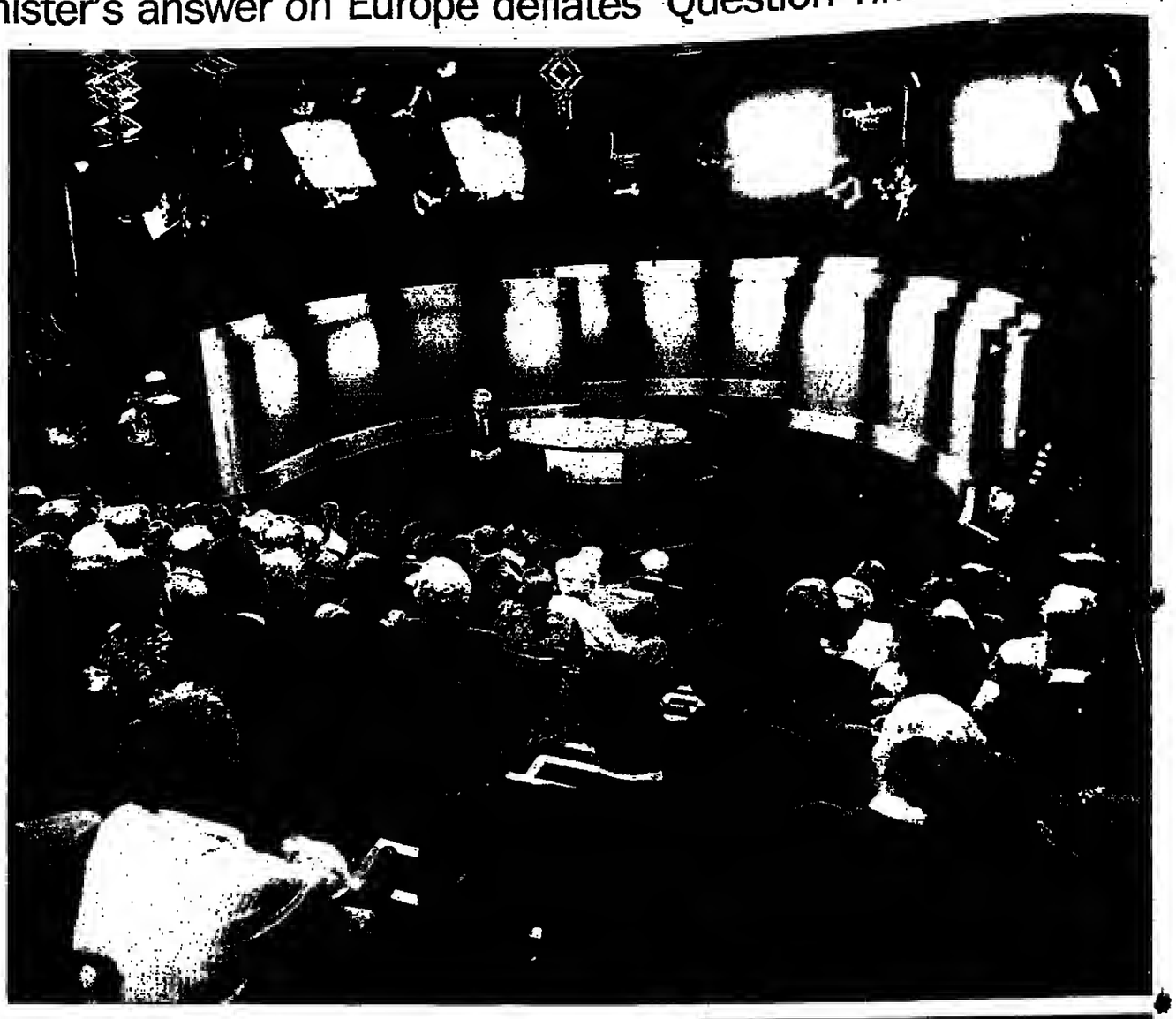
A long day's wait and the Prime Minister's answer on Europe deflates 'Question Time' audience

They quizzed Major, but prefer Prescott



Paul McCann
Media Correspondent

Question Time's producers are based in the same suite of offices as the Wandsworth Job Club. But proximity to south London's unemployed is not allowed to influence the television production company's selection of *QT*'s audience – even if the Home Office minister Ann Widdecombe maintained once that Labour voters must be pretending to be Tories in order to get on and heckle her.

The audience for Thursday night's election *QT* with John Major were the lucky ones. Capron Productions, which has been making *QT* for the last three years, estimates that each year more than 30,000 people apply to be in the audience.

But this audience is a tired, harassed, lot. For security reasons, Thursday night's show was switched from studios at London Bridge to BBC Television Centre at the last minute and the recording delayed.

Unlike the usual *QT*s which travel the country, the audience has come from all over the country and had been waiting for hours in the BBC's audience reception centre. For obscure reasons of fire safety the reception centre doesn't have enough chairs for them all.

"He's getting very bolshie," says worried producer Sue Ayling, indicating a tall man in a hacking jacket and Liberal Democrat sticker. "I think he's a Tory," she says oddly.

The *QT* audience strongly disproves smart media assumptions about electoral apathy. These people are refreshingly serious about who runs the country.

Before coming Julie Page, 34, from Redcar asked amongst her friends to see what they would ask the prime minister: "I feel quite a responsibility," she said, "because I'm representing a lot of people." She also read more newspapers and tried to keep up with the election, but she was a political animal anyway. "I shout at the screen every week," she says.

Airing their views: David Dimbleby warming up the *Question Time* audience before John Major (above) finally makes his appearance Photographs: BBC

> ❝ That was very boring and very disappointing. But I did get on the telly ❞

Others are hoping to get their question asked so they can alter the nature of the debate: "The environment just has not been mentioned," said Rachel Jennings, 27, a member of Friends of the Earth from Leicester. "I wanted to make sure it gets some airing in the media."

Her partner, Tony Thapar, 27, is another shouter: "Heseltine, definitely. He makes me swear at the telly."

Mr Boulton, 45, a road accident specialist from near Stoke-on-Trent, takes his love of televised politics a step further. "I record the news if I think I'm going to miss it," he says. As a Tory Mr Boulton is sorry about being on when John Major is the guest because he doesn't want to "bowl him any low balls".

Eventually the audience is allowed into the studio and a Mr Stirling-Whyte enquires about how to get into the front row. "They're all getting it taped at home you know," says one of the producers."

Settling into their seats the audience indulges in mass hair-primping, lipstick-applying, and tie-straightening.

But still no sign of John Major. Instead we watch a "best of" video of *QT* from the last three years to get in the mood. This is standard practice at every *QT*, but the grilling ministers are given on the tape, about everything from the Scott report to BSE, probably just serves to remind the audience of the shambles the night's guest has presided over.

Few of the audience come expecting to be won over, but there are moments of the kind of voter clarity that gets lost in opinion polls: "I came because I'm working for the Liberal Democrats," says Katie Path, 20, a politics student at the University of Greenwich, "but if Major convinces me he could sort out Northern Ireland I would vote for him. I feel very strongly about getting peace there."

After a warm-up with some BBC executives, nine lucky people are told their question will be one of those asked direct to the prime minister.

The studio manager then juggles around whole rows, swapping the questioners in their seats. This is supposedly for the benefit of boom mikes and cameras, but you can tell everyone suspects there is some aesthetic censorship going on.

Mr Stirling-Whyte ends up in a middle row. One woman sitting behind someone whose question will be asked looks pleased. She'll be on screen, but won't have to worry throughout the programme about fluffing her lines.

Eventually, after a slight nervous hesitation in the wings, Mr Major appears.

He need not have worried. Most of the audience has been on the hoof since lunchtime and it is now 10.30pm. They are tired and for his first 20 minutes Mr Major tackles the intricacies of Conservative policy on Europe. After that the wind is well and truly out of the audience's sails.

"That was very boring and very disappointing," says Rachel Jennings afterwards. But she did get a question in, "So I did get on the telly." But on the whole most of the people spoken to by *The Independent* would rather have seen John Prescott.

A veiwers' institution

Question Time was first transmitted on 25 September 1979, and since then has become a political institution. Broadcast every Thursday evening on BBC1 during the political season, it allows members of the public to put their questions to politicians and key people from a variety of spheres.

Question Time is broadcast from all parts of the country, as well as from Washington and Paris.

It has the largest audience of any political discussion programme – around 4 million, and a studio audience of 200, who are able to cast their vote electronically on a range of issues. There have been more than 1,700 pannelists since the programme began.

The programme has been presented by David Dimbleby since January 1994. His predecessors were Peter Sissons (1989-1993) and Sir Robin Day (1979-89).

QUOTES OF THE DAY

❝ You're not in Nigeria. You can't buy policies with cash here you know
– Millionaire Paul Sykes, who offered to help pay election expenses for Tory candidates opposed to the Government's "wait-and-see" policy on Europe

I have had communications with my grandson. It was not a soundbite, I can assure.
– Paddy Ashdown on the new family member

There are only four parties seeking government, and the Referendum Party is one of them
– Referendum Party lawyer Geoffrey Robertson QC argues for more election broadcasts

It did not occur to me that Mr Dorrell would come out with what he said. I was in shock.
– Pet Whittaker, responding to a the minister's suggestion that she change to a fundholding GP in order to secure a heart bypass operation

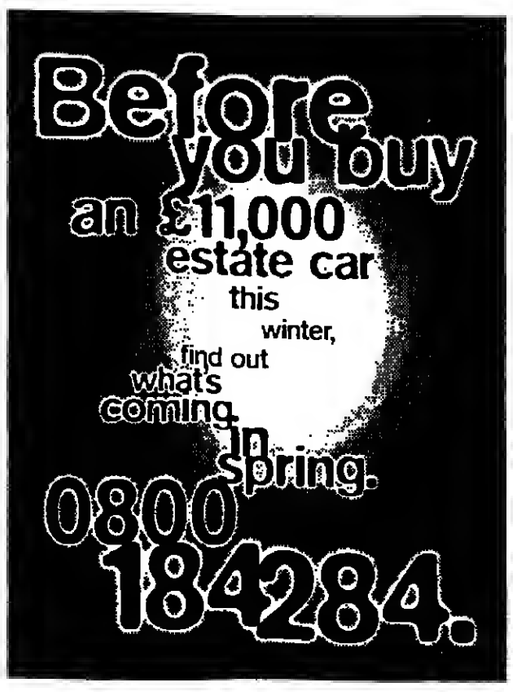
Good heavens no! ... I have been saying to the candidates, are you trying to become a member of Parliament only to hand over the powers of Parliament to Brussels, a non-elected bureaucracy? I invented the answer – No, no, no.
– Lady Thatcher, asked whether Britain should enter the single currency

We are going to make the most comprehensive attack on crime this country has seen
– Tony Blair's party election broadcast

We were unable to have nurses here because they were specifically told they would lose their jobs
– Local councillor Jean Smith explains why there were no nurses at a Liberal Democrat campaign meeting in Chard

Puerile
– Edwina Currie 'a opinion of the Conservatives' "dummy" adverts ❞

Compiled by Sam Coates



Gummer vaunts his green credentials

Nicholas Schoon
Environment Correspondent

Funny things happen in election campaigns. Ministers can be galvanised into dramatic state interventions which are extremely rare and unusual the rest of the time.

Take the case of John Gummer, Secretary of State for the Environment. He has just slapped a Nature Conservation Order on an environmentally precious patch of chalk downland in East Sussex to stop a farmer ploughing it up to plant flax.

It is only the fourth such order to protect an officially designated wildlife site that he has made in his four years in the job. He did so after Friends of the Earth highlighted the threat to the orchid and butterfly-rich patch of countryside on the South Downs near Lewes last week, and the Labour Party and the Liberal Democrats became very agitated.

Stranger still is the fact that English Nature, the government agency which is its official adviser on these matters, had earlier decided that the threatened part of this particular Site of Special Scientific Interest was not of "National Importance" – so it was not worth asking Mr Gummer to intervene to save it.

Precious flower: The field at Offham farm which is home to rare species of flora and fauna
Photograph: Andrew Buurman

Mr Gummer asked English Nature to think again about its advice to him – very quickly and very hard. Now, it appears, the advice has changed. "Significant populations" of two wildflowers, both very rare in the United Kingdom – the bastard toadflax and the round-headed rampion – have been discovered at the site. And so he has decided to grant a Nature Conservation Order.

That means Farmer Justin Harmer is forbidden from ploughing the grassland for nine months while he carries on negotiating with English Nature about how the land should be managed.

He had already ploughed part of it, because the European Union cash subsidies he can get for planting flax are much more generous than British government farm subsidies for protecting wildlife – and English Nature declined to pay anything like enough to make up the difference.

Yesterday English Nature declined to say anything about the site or its advice to Mr Gummer or the site "because this has become a political matter, and as a government agency we can't get involved in politics during an election."

But the secretary of state's unusual request for English Nature to reconsider the matter caused anxiety within the organisation – and a flurry of tense exchanges between its Peterborough headquarters and its local office which covers the South Downs area. "We're not enjoying this at all," said one of its staff.

The Department of the Environment, which also takes extra care to be non-political during election campaigns, said: "Information has only recently become available to justify the site as being of national importance."

However unusual all this has been, the fact is that Mr Gummer has saved a wildlife site in the full glare of election publicity. Friends of the Earth is delighted – while still fulminating against the legal loopholes and warped subsidies which still allows similar sites to be threatened.

The ending gets even happier. Yesterday, Farmer Harmer decided to help environmental protesters unplough the part of the site he had already damaged. They are turning the turves cut by the plough grass-side up again, in the hope that the flowers will survive.

Trusts accused of gagging nurses' voice

Barrie Clement

Health Trusts throughout Britain came under fire yesterday for refusing to allow nurses to make their voices heard at the hustings.

Trust employees all over the country have been prevented from contributing to local debate by "gagging" clauses in their contracts.

In Chard, Somerset, Paddy Ashdown attacked senior administrators at the local hospital for preventing nurses from participating in a public meeting on health.

On Thursday Mr. Ashdown claimed he was stopped from visiting the Ambulance Trust for Brecon by management who said they did not want their staff involving themselves in politics. Mr Ashdown said: "The same thing has happened wherever we've been on the campaign. That's why we have not seen any nurses at our discussions on health. This gagging is outrageous and interferes with the democratic rights of nurses."

Both the Liberal Democrat and Labour argue that such bans can only benefit the Government, which is aware of low morale in the service.

Jean Smith, a Liberal Democrat councillor in Chard, asked nurses at Taunton and Somerset NHS Trust to join an "open circle" on health presided over by Mr Ashdown. Initially she received a favourable response.

"Nurses and managers were quite willing. Then I received a phone call from a senior administrator who told me that it would not be possible. I contacted a nurse in another Trust and she said it was more than her job was worth."

The open circle, involving doctors, pharmacists and other health experts, went ahead in the absence of nursing representatives.

Local GP Dr Kate Staveley told Mr Ashdown that the staffing was so low at a local community hospital that patients were better off at home.

"One of my patients went to the hospital because we were unable to find out what was wrong with her. But she stopping drinking there and became dehydrated. She developed horrendous bed sores because the nurse was unable to look after her and ensure she had enough to drink. Her niece agreed to look after her at home and within a fortnight she was much better."

Edith Hurr, a 67-year-old confined to a wheelchair, told the meeting that on the top floor of the community hospital there was only one qualified nurse for 25 patients.

"If someone had a cardiac, the other 24 would have to fend for themselves," he said.

Mr Ashdown asked the meeting what they would do if they were Health Secretary Stephen Dorrell for a day. Most emphasised the need for better health education.

One doctor said that the medical profession were being overburdened with trivial ailments and that patients should be taught to look after themselves unless there was a serious problem.

Edward McNally, chief executive of the Taunton and Somerset NHS Trust, said he had issued no special instructions to prevent employees attending the meeting, but his organisation abided by a circular which had been issued by the Department of Health.

Mr McNally said the advice was that NHS staff should remain politically impartial. They should not appear at political meetings in a professional capacity especially at election times. He said the circular had been issued some years ago.

Ashdown: 'It's an outrageous violation of nurses' rights'

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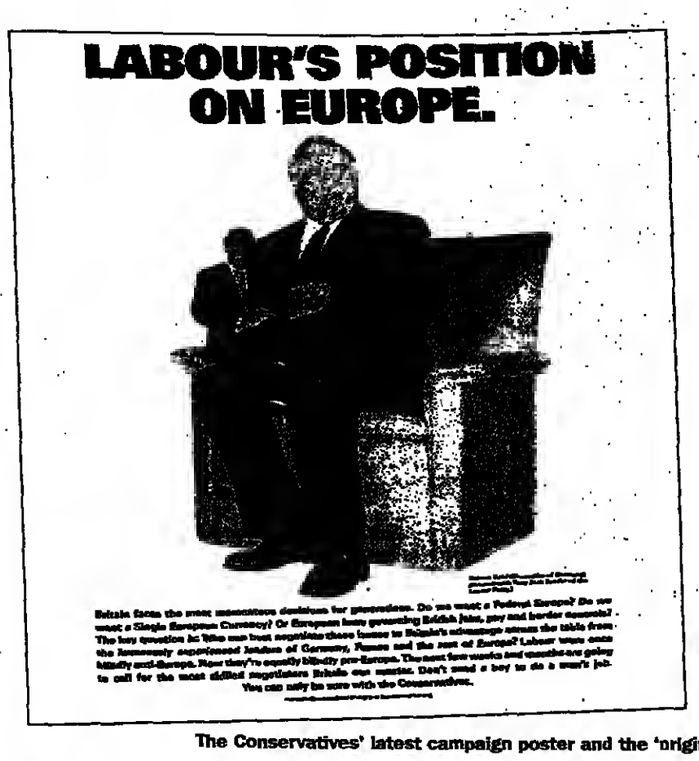
Spitting Image: Tory attack on Blair mimics famous US election cover



The Conservatives' latest campaign poster and the 'original' from *Esquire* showing the Democratic candidate Hubert Humphrey as a puppet of the outgoing leader, Lyndon Johnson

Paul McCann
Media Correspondent

The Conservative Party's latest ad portraying Tony Blair as a puppet of Germany's Chancellor Kohl is a *straight copy* of one of the most famous images in the world of advertising and design.

The party first claimed that the inspiration for the ad, which has already attracted 30 complaints to the Advertising Standards Authority, came from a sketch by the Deputy Prime *Minister Michael Heseltine. If that is* the case, then his ownership of the advertising industry trade magazine *Campaign* has probably rubbed off.

The image in fact comes from a cover for an edition of US Esquire magazine in the late Sixties by the magazine's then art editor George Lois.

The original features Hubert Humphrey, the US Democratic presidential candidate in *1968*, sitting in the lap of the retiring President Lyndon Johnson.

Humphrey had been LBJ's vice-president and the *Esquire* cover was emblematic of Humphrey's unwillingness to come out from under LBJ's influence and coodemn past policies on the Vietnam war.

"Everybody in advertising knows that image," said Dave Trott, partner in the advertising agency Walsh Trott *Chick Smith. "It's an okay image, but* it is informed by an idea of advertising that went out of fashion in the Fifties."

"It assumes that the pnblic are absolute idiots who believe whatever you pnt in your ads. Instead you have to find out what people can be made to believe before you do an ad. I don't think many people will fall for something this blatant."

> ❛It assumes people are idiots but not many will fall for something so blatant❜

The ASA said yesterday it would refer the ad to its adjudication committee for a judgement on the 30 complaints it had received by telephooe *and fax during yesterday.* The ASA upheld complaints last year about the Tory "Demon Eyes" ad.

However an ASA spokesman said be doubted there would be a *similar* adjudication in this case because the puppet ad is "not in the same league". The ASA was concerned about Demon Eyes because it represented Mr Blair as sinister. Labour said yesterday it would not be complaining to the ASA.

John Major defended the advertisement: "The coocept that the leader of Germany or that the leader of *France* or *the leader of Britain* could actually say, 'here I am going off to Amsterdam, I've changed my red flag for a white flag, here are my surrenders, please can I have a seat, if you doo't have a seat I'll have a knee', what nonsense."

However, the pro-European Tory MP Edwina Currie condemned the advert as "puerile". She added: "We should not be portraying Chancellor Kohl as an ogre of any kind."

The shadow Foreign Secretary Robin Cook condemned the ad as pathetic and said it illustrated how desperate the Conservatives had become: "What makes the poster so pathetic is that Tony Blair is in full command of his party. In stark contrast John Major has given up any preteoce he leads his."

Exploiting British anti-German feeling and stereotypes has become *something of a trend in advertising.* Most famously, an ad for Carling Black Label mocked the German's supposed fondness for getting to sun loungers first. Even the Germanic-sounding beer Lowenbrau was sold last year with a poster campaign mocking the Germans' reputed lack of humour. Ironically the German lager Beck's has been running a campaign about the threat to German beer from an over powerful EU.

Heseltine: Tories claim original idea came from his sketch

Angry PM hits out on matter of trust

Anthony Bevins
Political Editor

Joho Major last night stirred the controversy over the Tory depiction of Tooy Blair as Chancellor Helmut Kohl's dommy, saying the notioo would be mad to trust a man whn rhanged his mind "as often as a grasshopper jumps".

The Conservative leader told a party rally *in Manchester that* while Mr Blair had repeatedly appealed for the voters' trust, he was not to be trusted no anything from defence and terrorism throogh to small businesses and inheritance tox.

"Imagine Britain had trusted what Mr Blair had said in the past. In 1983, he would have taken Britaio not of Europe altogether. Io 1986, he would have surrendered our nuclear weapons. Jo 1986, he would have stopped the creation of the Siogle Market. In 1991, he would have signed Britain up to the Social Chapter and – if he'd followed his leader – the single currency, too.

"While the Mr Blair of 1994 boasted he would never see Britaio isolated in Europe. 'Trust me, trust me, trust me, trust me,' he's pleaded, os he's drifted from withdrawal through indecision to uncontrolled sorrender. Mr Blair rhanges his miod as nften as a grasshopper jumps."

But the Prime Minister then began to mix his imagery, saying that if Mr Blair was represeoting Britain at the oext European summit, European leaders would eat him alive. "It would be like sending a fly to a spiders' convention," he warned.

Mr Major said that along *with surrender abroad, Labour* was nffering division at home, with its plans for devolution. He said Mr Blair would "take the ancient, functionning constitution of this kingdom ... and gash through the tapestry with a vandal's knife. The consequence would be a ... Disunited Kingdom drifting towards a United States of Europe".

Greens to act over BBC's 'unfair' election coverage

Ian Burrell

Green party members are planning a campaign of direct action against the BBC in protest at their lack of coverage in the election *campaign.*

The party's supporters are furious at a leaked memo from a senior BBC news executive which instructs programme-makers to give minimal coverage to the Greens.

The memo, seen by *The Independent*, lumps the Green Party with the extreme right-wing British National Party and single-issue parties *like the Pro-*Life Alliance and the Refereodum Party.

Written by Anne Sloman, the BBC's chief political adviser, it lays down that the Greens and other "minor" parties will be given no more than one feature on each of *Newsnight*, the *Six O'Clock News*, Radio 5 and the Radio 4 *Today* programme *in the entire* campaign.

It states that requests by minor parties to feature alongside the main parties on programmes like *Question Time* and *Any Questions* are "not likely to be met".

The Greens, who described *their treatment* by the BBC as "shabby and disreputable", argue that if they were given airtime to reflect their share of the vote, they would receive more than five minutes coverage a day.

David Icke, who resigned in 1991, is still regarded as a Green

Senior figures in the party said the lack of coverage was partly responsible for the political apathy among young voters who *feel* there is no alter- native to the mainstream parties and their obsession with the floating voters of *Middle England.*

Peter Barnett, the party's spokesman, said the Greens were ridiculed by the BBC as a party for "woolly hats, sandals and beards". In a rare mention, the BBC continued to associate the party with David Icke who resigned six years ago.

"This has been going on for years and is one of the reasons why green politics are suppressed in this country and such a part of people's lives in other countries," he said.

The Greens, who fielded more than 250 candidates in the last election, blame the lack of media coverage for their disastrous showing.

Their failings contrast starkly with the success of Greens in other parts of the world. The party is represented in 70 countries and there are 30 Green MEP's sitting in Strasbourg.

Green party activists have already been involved in direct actions against road-building projects and the new runway at Manchester airport, where they set up the first camp and gave protestors a mobile phone.

Lawful direct actions are being planned next week at BBC television and radio offices around Britain.

Candidates have already begun disrupting BBC coverage by exploiting requirements in the Representation of the People Act to give a voice to all candidates in a featured constituency. Murray Falconer, who is standing in Inverness East, Nairn and Lochaber, sabotaged a planned BBC Scotland programme by refusing to take part. The programme-makers had wanted Falconer to sit in the audience with other "minor" candidates while the three main parties and the Scottish National Party were given a seat on the platform.

The Greens claim their local election campaign for 1 May has been completely ignored. The BBC has refused to screen its local election broadcast, costing the party £7,000 which could have been used to field more general election candidates.

Portillo slates nuclear policy

Stephen Goodwin

One of the great perennial election bogeys of the post-war decades was wheeled out yesterday – the "loony left" defence policy.

Michael Portillo, Secretary of State for Defence, said abandoning nuclear weapons and withdrawing from Nato would leave the armed forces impotent, damage the country's reputation and destroy defence jobs.

But though the rhetoric was familiar, Mr Portillo had a new target. This election's unilaterists are not in new Labour, its CND image excised by Messrs Kinnock, Smith and Blair, but the Scottish National Party.

"The SNP has a vintage loony-left defence policy. It is easily the most left-wing defence policy on offer at this election," Mr Portillo told an Edinburgh oews conference. Outside was the Tories' latest poster, a cartoon pillorying the Nationalists in a "Hands Up" style once used against Labour.

In an independent Scotland, the SNP would negotiate a phased, "but complete", withdrawal of Trident from the Clyde. The party's objection to nuclear weapons would be incompatible with membership of Nato and so it proposes a phased withdrawal from that too, though a free Scotland would still co-operate with the alliance.

The Scottish Army would have 9,000 regular troops. The Scottish Navy would have a surface fleet and submarines and there would be a conventional air force.

But Mr Portillo said the forces proposed by the SNP would be incapable of engaging in "high intensity conflict" and therefore unable to take part in maintaining peace around the world.

Many defence industry jobs would also be at risk. "It is implausible that in a separate Scotland, that Scottish industries should go on supplying the needs of armed forces in other parts of the United Kingdom," he claimed.

But Michael Russell, chief executive of the SNP, said Scotland had lost 20,000 defence-related jobs since 1992 under Mr Portillo's stewardship. "Portillo should be coming to Scotland to apologise ... not to display his usual breathtaking arrogance."

The SNP is promising to spend £70m over four years to help industries diversify away from weapons production. All service personnel and MoD employees from Scotland would be offered an opportunity to transfer to the new state's forces.

Mr Russell said Scots were "vastly in favour" of getting rid of atomic weapons. "What small nation of 5 million people would want to maintain nuclear weapons?" he asked.

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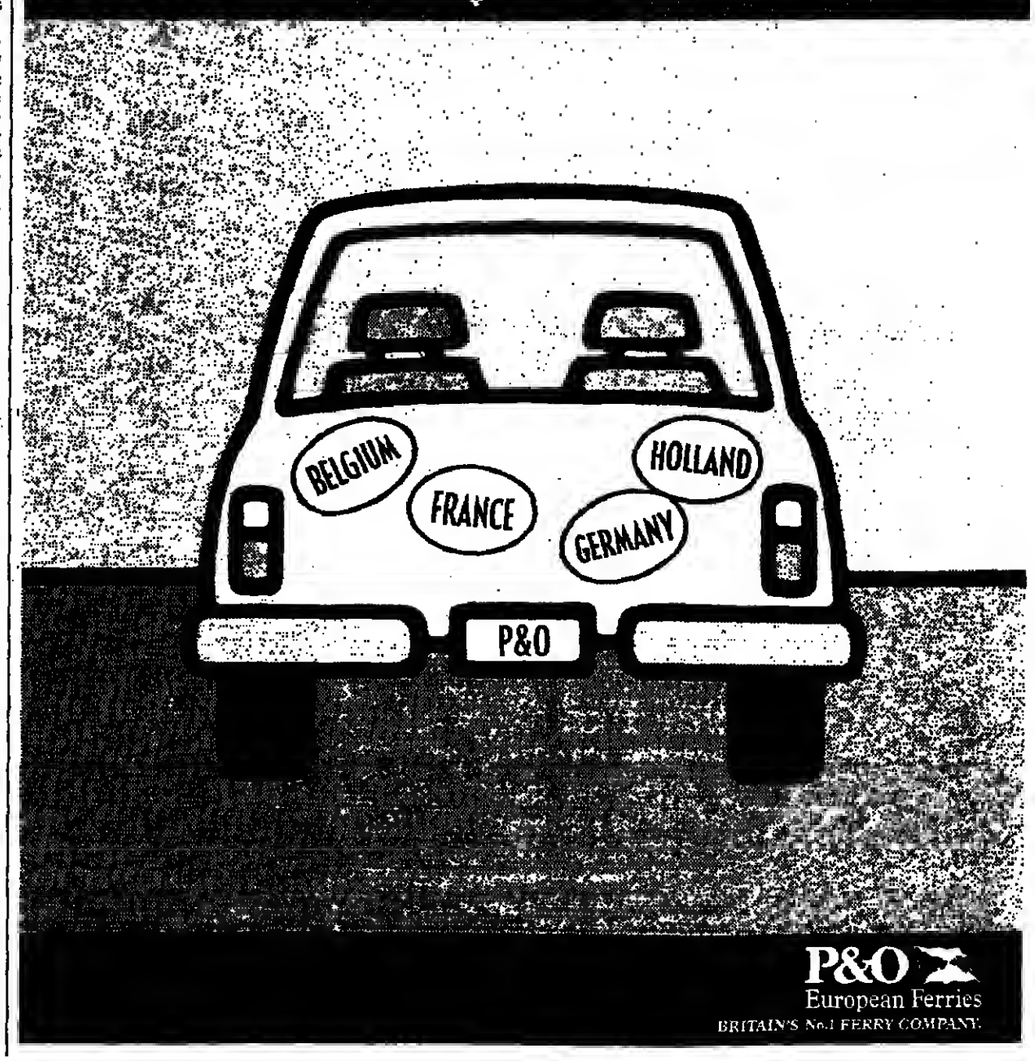

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THE INDEPENDENT election'97

Disaffected minorities try DIY politics

Randeep Ramesh

The might of the majority is pressing hard on the mind of Pankaj "Peter" Patel, the leader of the Fourth party – the self-styled voice of the ethnic voter.

In the rough trade of modern politics, Mr Patel thinks that minority voters get a raw deal. His thesis is simple. Minorities account for 5 per cent of the population and should have about 30 MPs in parliament.

Lal our's 100 target seats contain only one Asian candidate who, along with two black and two other Asians in safe seats, would join the party's current five non-white MPs. This is better than the Tories. They will probably lose Nirj Diva, their only Asian MP, in Brentford and Isleworth.

Local hopefuls, Mr Patel claims, have been thwarted by party politics. Even where ethnic voters wield disproportionate clout because they are concentrated in one area, they are rarely accorded the privilege of being represented by a home-grown activist.

He claims there were 10 ethnic Labour candidates for Sparkbrook and Smallheath – the Birmingham seat he intends to stand in – which ended up with a neighbouring MP, Roger Godsiff, being nominated.

Worse still, says Mr Patel, the Labour party, the traditional home of the ethnic electorate, neglects the immigrant constituency until it needs its votes. "The only time those guys come to help us is four weeks before the election," says Mr Patel.

"We are going to field candidates in two constituencies – Perry Barr and Sparkbrook and Smallheath – where ethnic minorities are either the majority or constitute a sizeable minority," he says.

"People here have been let down by the main parties – they are only concerned with Middle England's problems."

The Fourth Party was born out of a series of editorials Mr Patel wrote in his own publication, *Midland Asian*, last year. Calling for a set of proposals that would tackle law and order, education and cure the ailing health service, Mr Patel came to the conclusion that the traditional parties would not offer practical policies when they could buy off sections of the ethnic community with cheap promises.

"The Labour Party always talks of tackling the Kashmiri problem or the concerns of Muslim voters. The Conservatives court the upwardly mobile East African Asian vote. It is a case of divide and conquer," said Mr Patel.

In the fractured world of minority politics, race matters. Mr Patel is a Gujurati and a Hindu. He is unlikely to win support from the mainly Kashmiri population of Sparkbrook and Smallheath. To do that he has enlisted a Muslim accountant, Javed Akther.

Not everyone, Mr Patel admits, can he catered for. "We want to represent all immigrant communities – that includes Afro-Caribbeans, Irish and the Chinese. But practically, it is a question of time. We will concentrate on the south Asian vote for this election. If we win that it means 90 per cent of the minority vote in Sparkbrook – that translates to 45 per cent of the overall vote."

This rainbow-coalition theory of politics is difficult to promote. In a Hindu temple later in the day Mr Patel is trying to soothe a group of Hindu voters concerned about his support for Irish rights. "I thought they were blended in," says one man. "They are fairly blended but there are a lot who are not," explains Mr Patel. "How blended do you have to be?" asks one old lady.

The Labour candidate for Sparkbrook and Smallheath, solidly Labour at the last election with a majority of 13,000, is unimpressed. "I want to represent the whole community," says Roger Godsiff " Not just half of it."

Although Mr Patel insists he has never been involved in politics before, on the stump is he is a natural performer. He has already learnt how to cut the cloth of his conversation to impress the electorate.

In the heart of his would-be seat, Mr Patel is busy telling a white woman that "your concerns are my concerns".

To a gronp of older Gujurati women at a bus stop he is explaining – in outraged Gujurati – how young Australians manage to enter Britain because their grandparents were born here.

Punters, tired of being promised much and delivered little, warmed to Mr Patel's pitch. "I am not voting for Labour anymore. I did so because my father voted Labour and so did my uncle," says a Bengali shopkeeper on the Stratford Road.

"But nothing seems to change around here, so I do not think they will get my vote."

Black perspective: Pankaj Patel canvassing Gujurati women in Birmingham, who Labour have taken for granted, he says
Photograph: Kalpesh Lathigra

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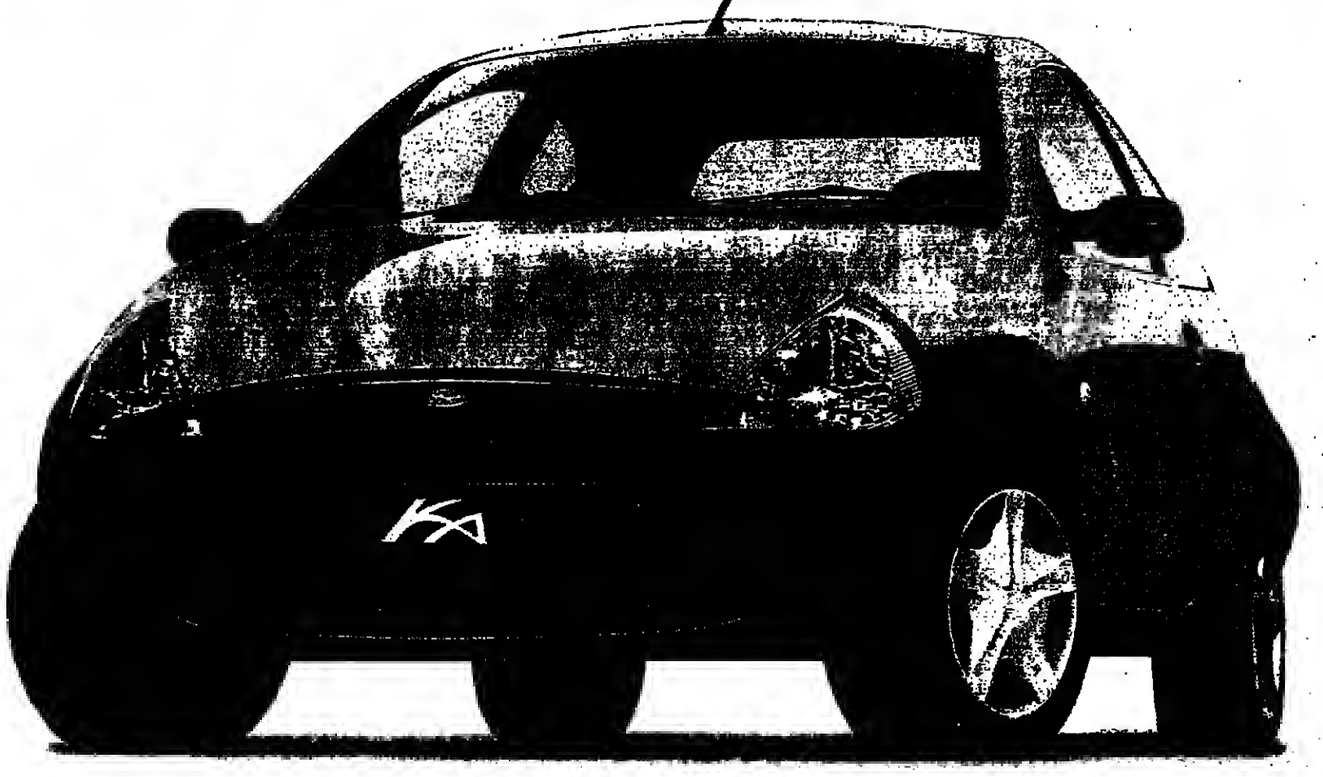

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Prescott under fire from party faithful

Colin Brown
Chief Political Correspondent

Disaffected Labour supporters yesterday protested to John Prescott that Labour's campaign was focused too much on the concerns of middle-class former Tory voters instead of traditional Labour party values for protecting the poor and disadvantaged.

The deputy Labour Party leader robustly defended his party's election strategy on BBC *Election Call* with Peter Sissons, but Mr Prescott is expected to relay their concerns to the campaign team led by Gordon Brown at Millbank Towers, the party election headquarters.

Voter concern at Labour's failure to campaign more on its positive policies for improving public services, and the lack of passion in Labour's campaign has become an issue on the doorsteps, and was recorded by Steve Richards, the commentator, in this week's *New Statesman*, who concludes that it will not stop Labour winning a big Commons majority.

Peter Cherry, from Lincoln, said he had resigned from the party last week because Labour had accepted Tory tax rates and spending levels, while the Liberal Democrats were proposing an extra 1p on tax to improve education. "The Liberals are coming up with the right taxes. They are going to put a 50p threshold on [top rate]. That is what you should be doing."

Anne Booth, from Rochester, said she had become a Labour Party member within the past six months, but was "terribly disappointed" with the campaign it was running as it failed to focus on the homeless, asylum-seekers who are held in a local jail, and children in poverty.

Under fire from the callers, Mr Prescott was challenged by Mr Sissons: "As an old Labour man, how do you feel about these calls for more help from pensioners, doctors, from teachers? They are all unhappy about the level of resources pledges – if any have been pledged at all."

Mr Prescott said Labour would be improving things for health, pensioners, crime and education by a different order of priorities. "But we have one very real problem. We do not know what the extent of the crisis in the public finances is ... Their [the Tories'] projections of the borrowing requirements have always been £10bn-£15bn out. You can't accept their figures . I don't believe anything this Government says. We have to be realistic and practical.

"Its not an easy decision, but I tell yon what we are not going to do – we are not going to bang our chest and say we are socialists and all this has got to be done. The people don't believe it. We have lost four elections because they [the voters] want to see a Labour government that is realistic, knows what its priorities are, and where its money is coming from."

Prescott: Labour will not say "we are socialists"

Five years on, voter who is still fuming

One of Mr Prescott's inquisitors was Joyce Elliott from Hereford – a name which rang Labour alarm bells, because she rattled Tony Blair on the subject of the minimum wage on the same programme in 1992, *writes John Rentoul*.

Five years on, she was still fuming that e minimum waga would force her to make redundancies at her nursery, only this time "Labour haven't had tha guts to set out what it would be".

She then turned her attack unexpectedly to what became a familiar refrain on the programme yesterday, that "you have prostituted yourselves to Tory policies" and "abandoned everything that people could believe in".

She described herself as a socialist from Jarrow, but refused to say how she would vote. When she spoke to *The Independent* later she said she "couldn't stand" Mr Blair five years ago, when he was Labour's employment spokesman. She had warmed to him, but recently had been put off because "he just will not answer a question – they should have a chameleon for their mascot not a bulldog".

She admitted that, "as e 64-year-old woman, with socialist principles, running a business, I don't know who to vote for. I might vote for Arthur Scargill's Socialist Labour Party, but we haven't got one of those here ... I might end up voting for the Green Party."

هكذا من الأصل

Cabinet slow to back embattled Netanyahu

Benjamin Netanyahu with his wife Sarah, and President Ezer Weizman (right) at the funeral in Jerusalem yesterday of the former Israeli president, Chaim Herzog
Photograph: Nati Harnik/AP

Patrick Cockburn
Jerusalem

As Benjamin Netanyahu, the Israeli Prime Minister, waits to see if he will be put on trial there were signs yesterday that his support is fraying in his cabinet and governing coalition.

On Sunday Mr Netanyahu will learn if the attorney general, Elyakim Rubinstein, and the state attorney, Edna Arbel, agree with the police recommendation that he should be indicted with three of his associates. The police alleged this week that the prime minister had helped criminal suspects to appoint their own candidate as Israel's chief prosecutor.

It is unlikely that Mr Netanyahu himself will be indicted, the Israeli press said yesterday, but he is likely to be the target of a damning report on his behaviour. The daily *Yediot Ahamnot* says the state attorney's office is divided on the advisability of an indictment. It says that three senior officials are in favour and three are against, including the state attorney herself.

If Mr Netanyahu is not indicted the decision will certainly be challenged in the High Court which could decide that the prime minister will be prosecuted. The weakness of the case against him is that it depends on the evidence of Dan Avi-Yitzhak, the former lawyer of Aryeh Deri, the leader of the religious party Shas, who is on trial for corruption. Mr Deri is accused of seeking the appointment of Roni Bar-On, an obscure party loyalist, as attorney general in order to influence the outcome of his trial.

Mr Netanyahu faces two political dangers, even if he is not indicted. Members of his cabinet have been slow to come to his defence and their efforts sound a little grudging. Many are old rivals of the prime minister. Dan Meridor, the Finance Minister, is reported to have said that it is hard to believe Mr Netanyahu will be wholly cleared.

Two of the parties forming the government coalition might withdraw support. The Third Way, a splinter group from the Labour party with four seats in the 120-seat Knesset, is restive. Yehuda Harel, one of its leaders, said: "If it becomes clear that there are serious improprieties so far as democracy and the public are concerned, then we won't be able to support the government and will call for early elections."

Natan Sharansky, the leader of the Russian immigrants' party with seven seats, is on bad terms with the prime minister, once a close friend. When the scandal broke in January he said that "if only 10 per cent of the allegations" turned out to be true the government should fall. He claims that in cabinet he voted for Mr Bar-On "because I trusted Netanyahu, and he betrayed me".

Mr Netanyahu continues to insist that he did nothing wrong. His tactic is to portray the police investigation as politically inspired. "At the heart of this matter is a political campaign," said Dan Naveh, the cabinet secretary. "The public in Israel wanted (this) government, and now there is an assault trying to change this."

This attack on the investigators is unlikely to do Mr Netanyahu much good. An opinion poll in *Yediot Aharanot* shows that 52 per cent of Israelis believe the police behaved professionally and honestly. A quarter of those asked thought the prime minister should resign now, 20 per cent that he should resign if indicted and 52 per cent only if he convicted by a court.

Missing plane 'has no link with Oklahoma bomb'

Mary Dejevsky
Washington

With rumours still flying thick and fast about the mysterious disappearance of an A-10 fighter plane over the western United States, no less a figure than the chairman of the armed forces chiefs of staff, General John Shalikashvili, has found it necessary to reject one of the more bizarre theories advanced.

The four-star general, the Pentagon's most senior military officer, said he had been following the search for the plane with interest, but did not see any connection between the missing plane and the bombing of the federal building in Oklahoma City two years ago. "I do not have enough information," he said, "to lead me to believe that there's somehow a connection between that incident in Oklahoma City ... and the disappearance of this airplane."

Gen Shalikashvili did, however, say that security was being increased around the Denver courthouse, where jury selection is in progress for the trial of Timothy McVeigh, the man accused of masterminding the bombing. Today is the second anniversary of the attack, which killed 168 people, and also the fourth anniversary of the Waco disaster, in which 80 people died when FBI officers tried to storm the Branch Davidian compound.

Intriguingly, the general also confirmed that additional security measures had been introduced at the North American Aerospace Defence Command in Colorado because there had been "an indication" of a security threat to the installation.

General Shalikashvili's denial was a response to speculation that the pilot of the missing A-10, Captain Craig Button, stole the plane – which was armed with four bombs – in order to stage some spectacular action for the Oklahoma City anniversary. This theory assumes that Capt Button may have sympathised with the illegal right-wing militia group with which Timothy McVeigh was supposedly involved – something that has been vigorously denied by those who knew him.

Theories such as this, and the even more far-fetched idea that Capt Button's A-10 might have been abducted by aliens, proliferate on the Internet. The problem for the military is that information about heightened security seems only to support the theories, and as yet the air force has been able to produce no compelling evidence to refute them.

Despite deploying the most sophisticated search techniques, including U2 spy planes and AWACS aircraft, it has failed to trace the plane, which went missing on 2 April after breaking away from a routine training exercise over Arizona. Air force officials blame the thick snow in the region of Eagle, Colorado, where some say they heard a possible plane crash at the time the plane would have run out of fuel. The air force now says, however, that it has no "seismic indications" of a crash in the area and will call off the search until the snow melts if nothing is found by Tuesday.

significant shorts

Asylum-seeking Iraqi held at Heathrow

The Government says it is detaining an opponent of Iraqi President Saddam Hussein at Heathrow airport while it considers his application for political asylum in Britain. Mashan al-Jabouri is leader of the Damascus-based Iraqi Homeland Party which wants to overthrow President Saddam. The party expressed concern over Mr al-Jabouri's detention. He has been held by immigration authorities since he arrived at Heathrow on Monday from Syria. **AP – London**

Korean talks delay

North Korea delayed the resumption of talks with US and South Korean officials yesterday on expanded peace negotiations that would include all three countries and China. "We understand they are consulting with their capital and that is not inconsistent with diplomatic negotiations," a US State Department official said of the North Koreans' delay. The official earlier expressed optimism that North Korea would agree to the four-way talks first proposed a year ago. **AP – New York**

Congress breaks impasse

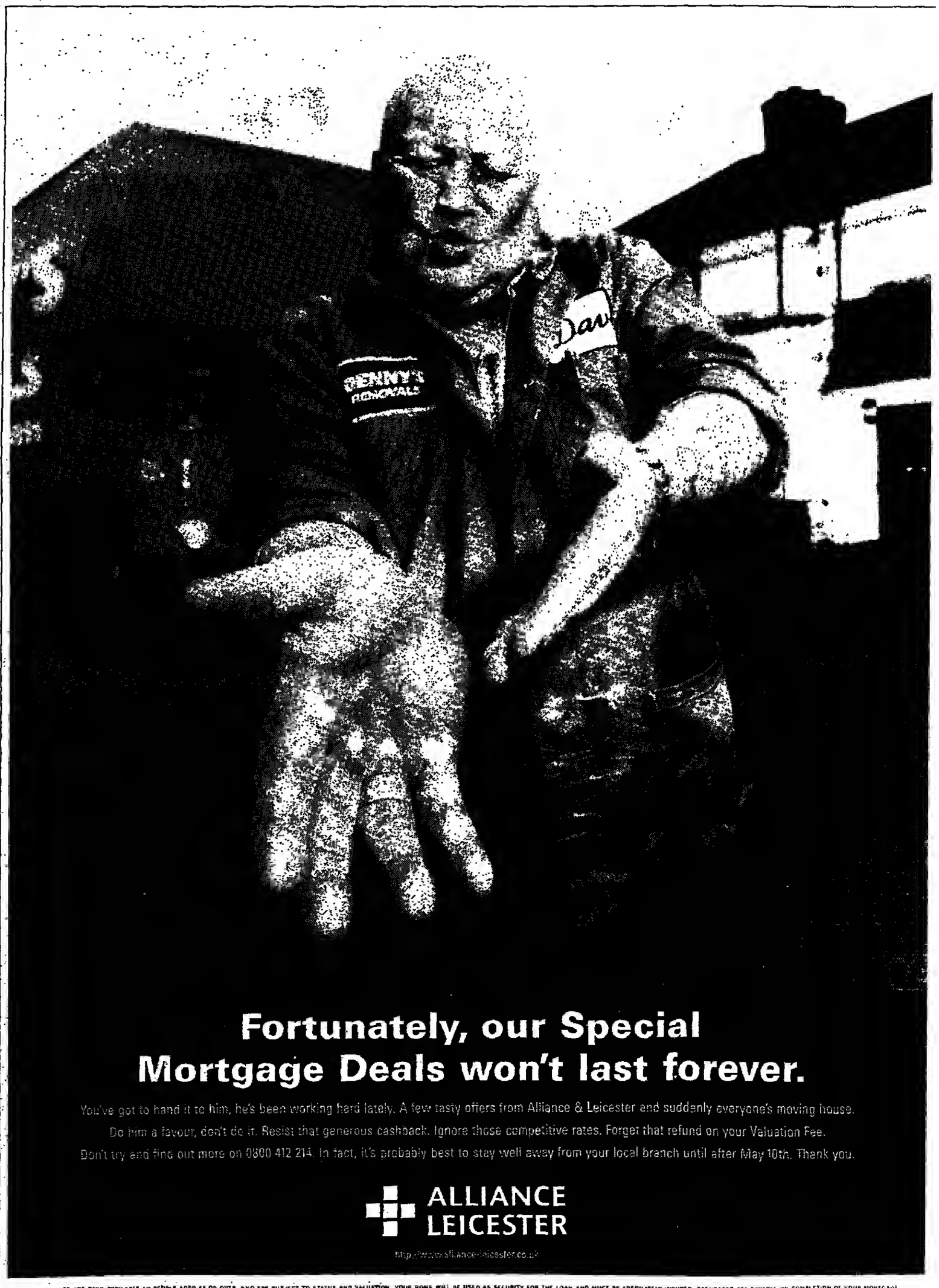
The Congress Party in India removed a major stumbling block to forming a new government yesterday, telling the president it will support a United Front government, but with a new prime minister. **AP – New Delhi**

French doctors arrested

Paris police detained 15 striking junior hospital doctors yesterday after a demonstration against government plans to reduce health spending. **Reuters – Paris**

Palestinians forced to Libya

Armed Libyan policemen and soldiers forced more than 200 Palestinian refugees to leave their camp on the Libyan-Egyptian border and to go back to Libya, Egyptian security officials said. The Palestinians were deported to the camp in 1995 at the order of Libyan leader Moammar Gaddafi. **Reuters – Salloum**



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Sun king of Sin City rises above bribery charge

High life: Sol Kerzner, the multi-millionaire (left), who set up his business empire with Sun City (far left), a luxurious gambling complex – with synthetic beach and jungle-covered 'lost city' – in the poverty-ridden black homelands of Bophuthatswana in South Africa Photographs: All Action/Frank Spooner Pictures

Mary Braid
Johannesburg

Sol Kerzner, the multi-millionaire who laid the foundations of his international casino empire in apartheid South Africa's reviled black homelands, is at the centre of a political storm after bribery charges against him were dropped.

For Mr Kerzner, 61, who seemed to suggest last month that he was just too rich to face prosecution, the decision by Christo Nel, attorney general for Transkei, to drop his decade-long campaign to bring Mr Kerzner to court is a vindication of his innocence.

But others claim that political pressure has helped to free Mr Kerzner of allegations that in 1986 he gave a ruler of the Transkei – one of the nine "independent" homelands in which blacks were condemned to live under apartheid – a bribe of 2m rand (£286,000) to secure exclusive gambling rights.

Last year, Bantu Holomisa, a former ANC minister and one-time favourite son of President Nelson Mandela, was expelled from the ANC after repeating allegations that Stella Sigcau, the public enterprises minister, had received a cut of Mr Kerzner's alleged bribe.

He then went further, claiming that senior ANC members – including Thabo Mbeki, the deputy president – had accepted favours from Mr Kerzner, and, in 1994, that the magnate made a 2m rand pre-election donation to the ANC, along with a polite request that the criminal charges against him be reassessed.

After initial ANC denials, President Mandela admitted that he personally received the donation from Mr Kerzner. Oddly, the President said no one else in the party knew about it.

Mr Nel insists his decision is free of political pressure and is the result of new evidence which weakens the state's chance of a successful prosecution.

He has refused to elaborate.

Mr Holomisa said yesterday that Mr Nel owed South Africans a full explanation.

"Let us hope he dropped the charges on his own and not through political pressure," he said.

A month ago Mr Nel failed in attempts to have Mr Kerzner extradited to South Africa from the United Kingdom. Nor did he fare any better with David Bloomberg, the former mayor of Cape Town and an alleged accomplice.

Mr Holomisa, struggling to form a new opposition party since being cast out by the ANC, warned that those he had accused should not relax yet.

"This case will continue to haunt those who were recipients of Sol Kerzner's favours," he said.

The removal of the threat of legal action has come at a crucial time for Mr Kerzner, most famous for Sun City (Sin City to critics who accuse him of collaborating with apartheid), the spectacular gambling complex, complete with synthetic beach and luxurious jungle-covered "lost city", set in the midst of the arid poverty-ridden plains of the former homeland of Bophuthatswana. Since South Africa's transition, his empire, once cramped by international anti-apartheid action, has grown at a phenomenal rate. Mr Kerzner now has gambling complexes in the Bahamas, Mauritius and France. Last year he teamed up with a North American Indian reservation to open a £180m casino complex.

But attempts by the man once described as the Donald Trump of the Southern hemisphere to gain a full licence in lucrative New Jersey have been stalled by the pending case in South Africa. The disappearance of charges almost certainly means full steam ahead.

Mr Kerzner says he is very pleased his name has been cleared. But members of the public remain cynical about the ease with which big business, once so National Party-friendly, has made chums with the ANC.

One caller to a local radio chat show yesterday quoted an old Xhosa proverb – a dog with a bone in its mouth does not bark. The caller said Sol Kerzner had ensured both the National Party and the ANC got their bones.

Austria vows to repel alien Balkan tide

Imre Karacs
Lindau

If it is true, as some Germans insist, that the Balkans begin in Austria, then this tiny Bavarian town in the foothills of the Alps marks the boundary between two worlds: the point where index-linked pensions fade into pyramid schemes.

In purely geographical terms, the Balkans are a good 400 miles down the road. In some respects, Lindau is the gateway to the East. Once the lorries packed with drugs or illegal immigrants trundle past its checkpoint, nobody can stop them from disgorging their contents into the streets of Western Europe.

The Bavarian border guards the southern flank of "Schengen country", a seamless land mass of seven states which peters out at the Atlantic coast.

> ❝If Italy were in Schengen, the Albanians would have an open road to Hamburg❞

The Germans used to moan about the burden of keeping the eastern hordes at bay, but now they are terrified of handing over control. On 27 October Austria, Greece and Italy are to become full members of the Schengen club, inheriting the task of stemming the flow of undesirable goods and people.

The lorries will make their last pit stop hundreds of miles east and south, along Austria's border with the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary and Slovenia. Lindau will become a deserted chicane.

The Germans, having watched their Austrian colleagues closely, are not sure that's such a good idea. They point out that while it takes three years to teach a German border guard how to "sniff out" heroin, the Austrians get only a few days' training before being thrown in at the deep end.

According to the German press, the Austrian border is like Swiss cheese. Anecdotes, or maybe urban myths, are circulating in Bavaria about Austrian hairdressers being hastily drafted in to man the barriers. *The Independent* spotted no scissors at Lindau, only an Austrian guard who seemed too young to be entrusted with anything other than a shampoo.

"We are fully trained officers," says Peter Durdak of the Bavarian border police. "We have decades of experience which the Austrians do not have." To put it bluntly, Austria is "not up to Schengen standards". That's not to say that the Austrians are shambolic. Given time, say three years, their people might become nearly as "effective and efficient" as the Bavarian officers.

They are trying very hard. Last month, Bavarian guards caught within the space of three days two lorries packed with illegal immigrants: 50 Kurds in one consignment and 40 Kosovo Albanians in the other. Both had been checked and waved through by the Austrians.

Vienna reacted to that embarrassment by supplying its troops with devices which try to detect an illicit human cargo through its carbon dioxide emission around the vehicle. They have not caught anybody yet, but their thorough searches have resulted in 12-hour queues at the border.

There is, understandably, not much love lost between the two forces as the Bavarians step up their verbal assault on their demoralised cousins. "It's not that we want to play the teacher and tell our neighbours what to do," says Michael Ziegler of the Bavarian Interior Ministry. "But Austria has no specific border force, and it takes time to set one up."

Munich's solution, likely to be vigorously backed by the German government at the next Schengen meeting in Brussels, is to postpone the handover until the year 2000. Austria would be fobbed off with control over the Vienna-Munich air corridor in the interim.

As for the credentials of the other two applicants, the prospect of Greece controlling Asian traffic does not bear thinking about, and Italy is equally dubious.

"If Italy were in Schengen, the Albanians who have been landing in Brindisi in recent weeks would have an open road to Munich or Hamburg," Mr Ziegler points out. "The question must be asked: 'Can Italy cope with the one million illegal immigrants already living there?'" In the absence of a reassuring answer, Lindau looks set to remain the end of the Schengen road for some time.

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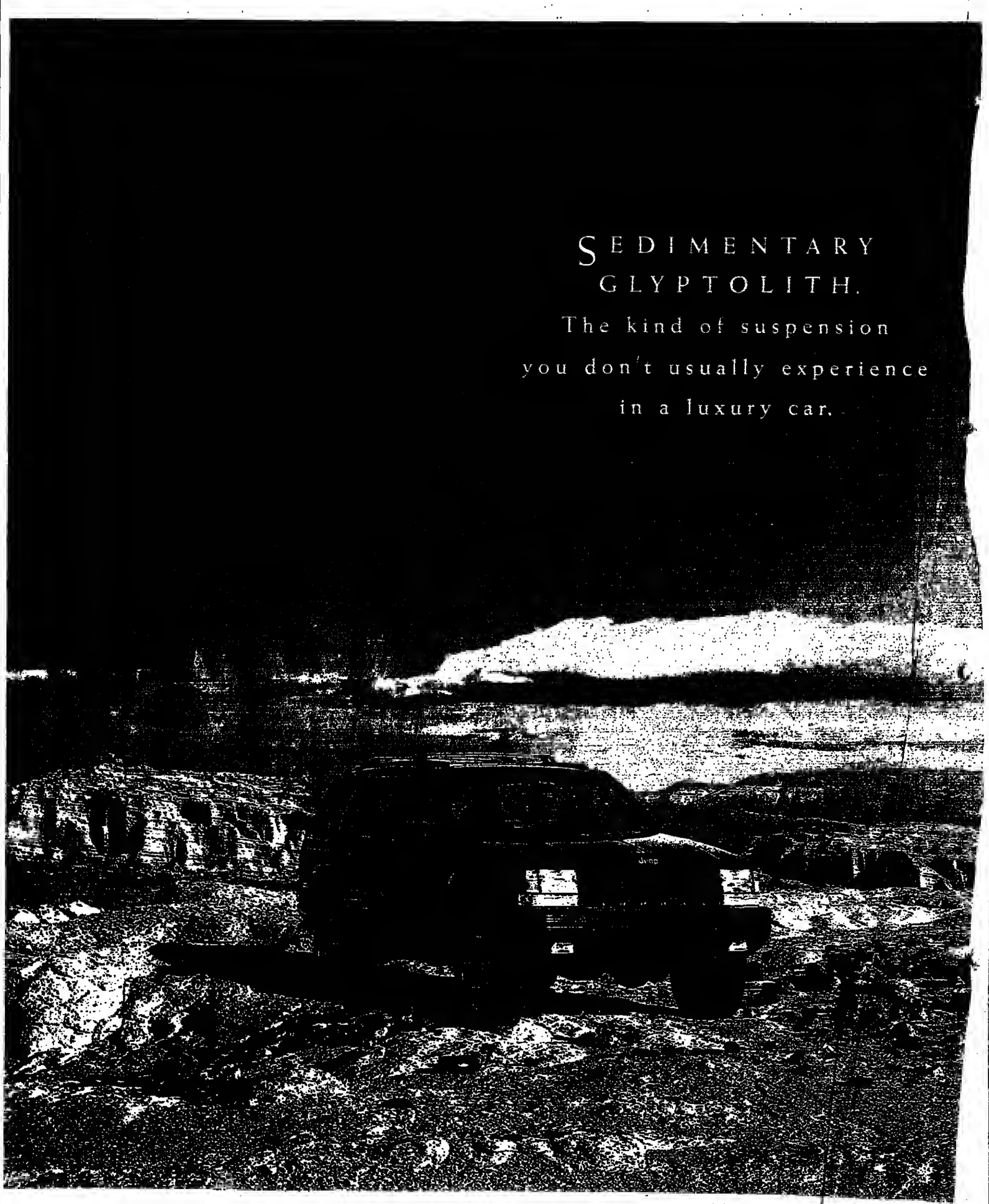

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Driller thriller: A Zairean with a mock weapon driving through Kinshasa during a rally demanding a tougher line against the rebels

Mobutu's dying city plays out a last sick joke

Ed O'Loughlin sees the regime fabricate a paroxysm of morality

Kinshasa – Sex tourists go to Thailand, adventurers head for the wilderness, and ghouls book tours of Bosnia. But for those who want to cultivate their cynicism at the tired end of the millennium, Kinshasa should be holiday destination number one. Looted, run-down, impoverished, stinking, isolated and soon to be besieged, it is becoming the world capital of the jaded, where the average citizen would make a Raymond Chandler private eye seem like a wide-eyed Scout.

The Kinshasans know their government, headed by the "Great Redeemer", President Mohntu Sese Seko, has looted billions of dollars from the country in the past 32 years. They appreciate the rebels advancing from the east are winning the war largely with weapons bought or captured from Mr Mobutu's army.

Yet the announcement this week that Mr Mobutu's cabinet wants to try a former prime minister, Kengo wa Dondo, for embezzlement and treason has raised few eyebrows. To paraphrase a line from the film *Apocalypse Now*, charging a Zairean politician with fraud is like handing out speeding tickets at the Monaco Grand Prix.

According to Mr Kin-kirk Mulumba, the new Information Minister, Mr Kengo disappeared with $1m (£625,000) of government cash three weeks after being sacked. Mr Mulumba said he was also suspected of sabotaging the war against Laurent Kabila's rebels. The government was investigating further, and an international warrant might soon be issued for Mr Kengo's arrest.

It would surprise nobody in Kinshasa if Mr Kengo had helped himself to an honorarium before slipping across the Congo River to Brazzaville. The US State Department calculated eight years ago that Mr Mobutu had taken $5bn (£3.1bn) from Zaire's substantial mineral wealth, a sum equal to the then national debt. But it does surprise people that, after years of unchecked state banditry, a senior politician should be called to account for such a trifling sum.

It seems that the more hopelessly paralysed and morally bankrupt the Zairean government becomes, the more stridently it talks of human rights, good governance and military victory. Last week, for instance, the newly appointed military Prime Minister, Lukulla Bolongo, marked the beginning of his term by promising to hold elections within a few months, after the country was pacified. Zaire would not be the first country to overcome significant early defeats and go o to find victory, he said. "Wherever our valiant soldiers have decided to engage in combat the enemy has been defeated," he said. "We remain an effective army, with our human potential intact and a worth that has already been proven across Africa. In Nigeria, Chad, Burundi and Rwanda."

Yet in Kinshasa most people seem to believe the main threat comes not from the rebels but the government army. Foreign observers say deserters and broken army units are drifting back towards the capital from the east, looting and vandalising. Stragglers have been arriving in the city since the war began six months ago. Until now, they have been easily picked up by Mr Mobutu's relatively well-ordered praetorian guard. But this could change when whole units start arriving on the edge of town."

Nobody knows what will happen next: Mr Mobutu could flee tomorrow; there could be a coup or a ceasefire; things might drift on until the first rebel mortar bomb lands at the airport, weeks or months from now. But everybody fears there will be one last orgy of looting and vandalism before the old kleptocratic Zaire gives up the ghost.

One old Zaire hand, a black American businessman, took it upon himself to enlighten journalists staying in the city-centre Memling hotel. Had we noticed, he said, the number of off-duty FAZ [government] soldiers hanging about outside?

"When a FAZ puts his foot down next to yours he don't want to dance," he said. "He's shopping for shoes." Newspapers report that many people have moved out of areas neighbouring military camps, the flashpoint for previous outbreaks of looting in 1991 and 1993. The pillaging was sparked off by Mr Mobutu's attempts to pay his soldiers with new banknotes that were not accepted on the street.

An African diplomat said most soldiers in Kinshasa were paid last month, albeit only $2 and a bag of rice for an enlisted government soldier. But another pay day looms next week. If the government does not have the money, or attempts to use new banknotes once again, the pillaging could resume.

This time French troops waiting across the Congo in Brazzaville have been joined by contingents from the US, Britain and Belgium, on standby to pull out their nationals.

Britain and the US have around 400 expatriates in the Zairean capital.

Those who remain risk becoming pawns in the struggle between Mr Mobutu's dying regime and Mr Kabila's Alliance of Democratic Forces. Rebel broadcasts have warned foreigners to leave Kinshasa for their own safety – Mr Kabila has promised to take the city in three weeks.

Mr Kabila has claimed Mr Mobutu is planning to murder many foreigners to provoke an international intervention in the capital, which would block the rebel advance.

Whatever the truth behind this claim, Mr Mobutu is suspected of orchestrating the 1991 and 1993 pillaging. By stopping the looting, which his soldiers had begun, he persuaded Western backers like France and Belgium that only he could hold Zaire together.

Ill-disciplined, badly trained and often unpaid, the army remains a law unto itself.

Two weeks ago, when a group of Western journalists tried to get to the southern city of Lubumbashi just before it fell, troops at the airport refused to recognise our expensive and painstakingly assembled collection of government credentials. We were held in isolation at the airport overnight.

Drunk soldiers barged in and out, demanding to know who we were and why we had come. A lieutenant, who seemed to be called Coco, left us in no doubt of his opinion of the Western press. "Speaking to you frankly," he said, "if it was left to me I would kill you all now and bury you where your bodies would never be found."

Coco was a talkative soul, and as the night wore on he expounded on the US-led, Anglo-Saxon, Jewish and Nilotic-Tutsi conspiracy to re-enslave Africa and bastardise the Bantu race by interfering with its womenfolk. He was particularly proud of his warrior ancestry and his record in the war against Mr Kabila. "I fought at Goma in November," he hissed, cradling his dirty AK-47. "I fought at Bukavu, at Uvira and – lately – at Kalemie."

We wanted to ask him when, at that rate of progress, he thought he would reach Cape Town, but somehow it didn't seem like such a good idea. Coco left us in the end, and we took what sleep we could on the wooden benches and concrete floor of the airport lounge.

It was cold and uncomfortable. But, like the people of Kinshasa, at least we had the army to protect us.

Kabile: Warned foreigners to get out of Kinshasa

> ❛ When a FAZ soldier puts his foot down next to yours he don't want to dance. He's shopping for shoes ❜

Lubumbashi (Reuters) – Bizima Karaha, Zaire's rebel foreign minister, said yesterday that there would be no ceasefire until President Mobutu Sese Seko relinquished power.

"We don't want any suspension of hostilities. We want the end of the war and that can only come about if the man who brought the war is kicked out. When Mobutu leaves, that will be the end of the war," he said.

Karaha said speculation that pending negotiations in South Africa would deal with some form of transitional power-sharing was incorrect. "What we are negotiating is the mode of departure of Mobutu," he said.

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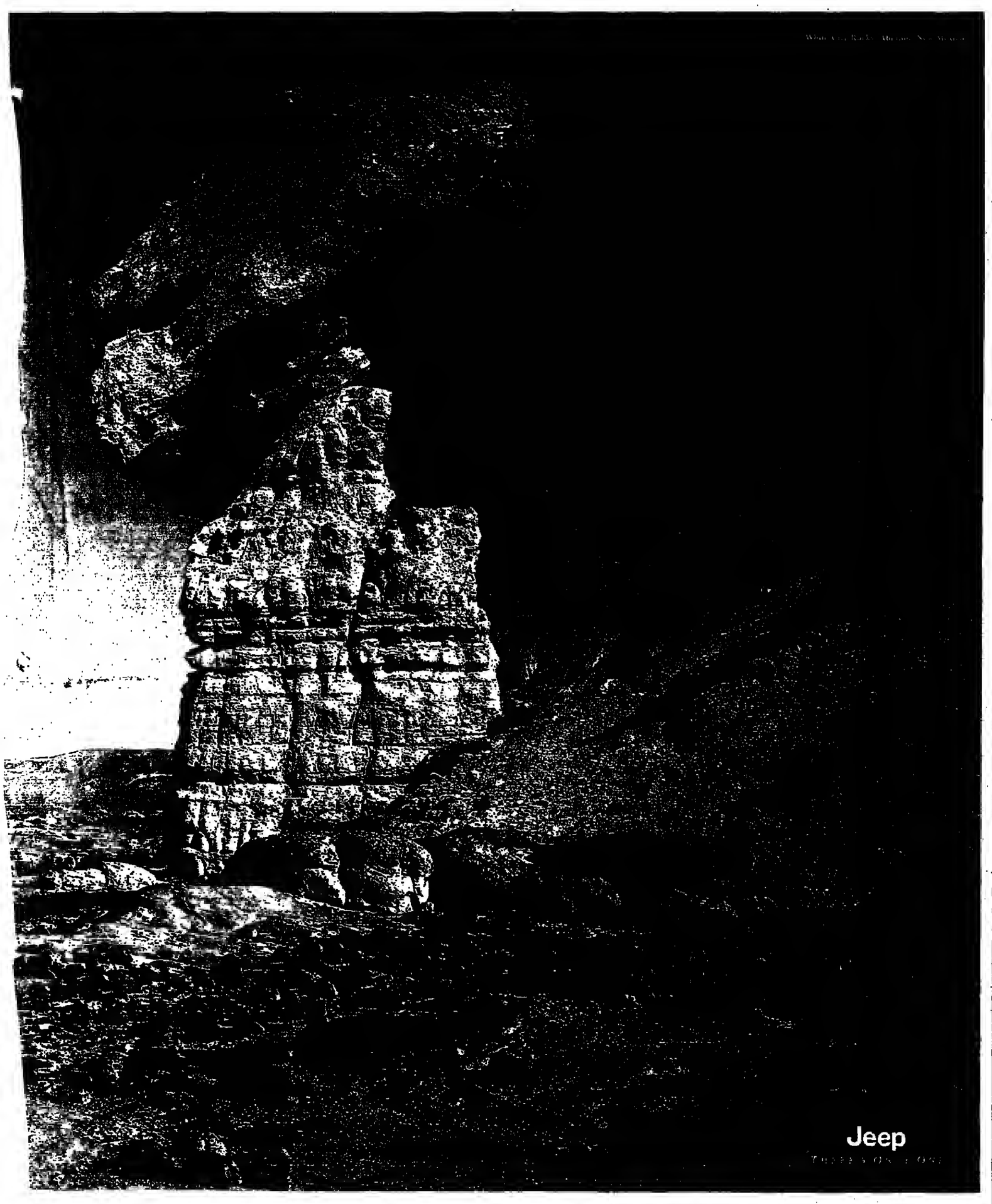

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Slow boat sails from China to Taiwan

Stephen Vines
Hong Kong

The tumultuous courtship between China and Taiwan moved from cold to warm yesterday, with the dispatch of the first ship in 48 years to sail directly from the Chinese mainland to the island of Taiwan.

China regards Taiwan as a renegade province, while the government of Taiwan clings to the notion that it is the sole legitimate government of China. These rival claims have made normal relations between the two states almost impossible since the end of the Chinese civil war in 1949.

None the less, the rhetoric belies the reality of growing ties between the rival Chinas. The agreement to restore shipping links, if only for transporting goods, marks an important stage in developing bilateral ties.

The initiative for the resumption of the shipping route came from the Taiwan government in May 1995. It has taken almost two years for agreement to reach fruition. In the meantime the Taiwan Strait, which separates the two countries, was transformed into a flashpoint for war as China launched a series of aggressive missile tests in an apparent attempt to influence the outcome of Taiwan's first ever democratic presidential election in 1995.

The tension between the states was as bad as it has been at any time since the early 1970s. But the two governments have remained committed to a pragmatic establishment of trading and other ties. The business relationship between the two states has led to the establishment of investments in China by an estimated 30,000 Taiwanese companies, pouring some $30bn (£18.5bn) into the Chinese mainland.

There have also been visits by officials on both sides of the Taiwan Strait and an official body has been established to improve cross-straits relations.

While economic relations flourish, China wages a relentless war to maintain Taiwan's diplomatic isolation and prevents the island's government from establishing any kind of substantive bilateral relationships with other nations.

Taiwan, for its part, is not averse to engaging in activity which provokes China. Last month, Taiwan's President Lee Teng Hui met the Dalai Lama, Tibet's exiled spiritual leader. The Chinese Government is extremely sensitive about matters related to Tibet and regards the Dalai Lama as one of its most implacable foes.

China suspects President Lee is edging Taiwan away from Chinese reunification, a view supported by dissident elements who have left the ruling party to join the New Party, which strongly advocates the reunification of Taiwan and China.

There is a long way to go before this goal can be achieved. More likely in the short term are further moves to forge links between the two states. A direct air route, for example, is under discussion. There are also plans for co-operation in protecting the investments of Taiwanese companies in China.

The return of Hong Kong to Chinese rule in July presents opportunities and challenges for Taiwan and China. As matters stand, Hong Kong serves as a neutral transit point between the two states, but cannot remain so. Some Taiwanese institutions will withdraw from Hong Kong, but others will remain, representing the first time that quasi-official Taiwan government bodies have been represented on Chinese soil.

Faithful family: An Indonesian woman breaks from praying outside a mosque in Jakarta on the feast of Eid al Adha yesterday to tend her crying daughter Photograph: Reuters

High life shared with lowland neighbours

PARIS DAYS

I first visited Paris when I was 14 years old with my Belgian godmother. She had been excited about the trip for days. France is the "big sister of Belgium", she repeated over and over, a wonderful, richly, cultured country. To my teenage amusement, she spent most of our short stay in a fury and a depression at the rudeness of the Parisians, which she attributed to her Belgian accent.

Parisians, of course, need no excuse to be rude. They are quite contentedly and naturally rude to one another. But it remains true that a Belgian visiting France needs a thick skin and a sense of humour, which fortunately many Belgians have. Four-wheeled Belgian visitors say that, as they drive through Paris, passers-by point at their tell-tale red and white number plate and double up with laughter.

The "*histoire belge*" is a staple of French wit, just as Irish jokes are thought to be funny by some in Britain. The Belgian joke typically presents the northern neighbours as crudely provincial, slow or surreally dotty. Why are Sabena pilots refusing to land at Charles de Gaulle airport? Because the runways are only 100 metres long but two kilometres wide.

Such jokes still tend to define most French people's view of Belgium, particularly those who have never been near their country's northern frontier.

As someone proud to be a half-Belgian, the nature of the Franco-Belgian relationship has been in my thoughts recently. But not just my thoughts. French and Belgian relations are usually as uneventful as the relationship between Bedfordshire and Northamptonshire.

In recent weeks, however, there has been a series of diplo-economic spats between the two countries. Renault's decision to close, without warning, a factory near Brussels caused outrage in Belgium (and, to be fair, widespread sympathy for Belgium in France). The Belgian police complain that France refuses to take seriously a series of cross-border investigations, including an extradition request for the French businessman, Serge Dassault. Beyond that, there has been serious talk in the Belgian and French press, and by serious French and Belgian politicians, of Wallonia rejoining France if the Flemish part of the country continues its pell-mell course towards independence. This is no longer the fantasy it might have seemed a few years ago.

More positively, one of the most interesting cultural events in Paris at the moment is an exhibition at the Grand Palais, off the Champs Elysées, entitled Paris-Bruxelles, Bruxelles-Paris 1848-1914. The exhibition traces the rich and confused cultural cross-currents – artistic, literary, musical and architectural – which flowed between the two cities in the 60 or so years after railways brought them within a few hours of one another.

French painters, such as Courbet and Manet, were encouraged, exhibited, imitated and – most importantly – bought in Belgium while they were still execrated in France. In the mid-century, practically the whole *équipe nationale* of French literature – Victor Hugo, Charles Baudelaire, Paul Verlaine, Arthur Rimbaud, Stéphane Mallarmé – spent long periods in Brussels escaping political persecution or starvation.

It was in Brussels that Hugo wrote and published *Les Misérables*. It was in Belgium that the poet Verlaine shot and wounded the poet Rimbaud and spent two years in jail. Baudelaire scratched a kind of living by giving readings in Belgium when no one would reward him in France. He remained rather poor, however and, envious of the sometimes crassly deployed wealth of the Brussels bourgeoisie, turned viciously anti-Belgian. To this day, some Belgians blame him for initiating their unfortunate image in France. "Qu'il avance ou qu'il recule, le belge est toujours ridicule (Going forwards or backwards, a Belgian is always ridiculous)" wrote the ungrateful poet.

By the *fin de siècle*, the artistic traffic was two way. Art Nouveau began in Brussels and flourished in Paris. The Belgian poets Emile Verhaeren and Maurice Maeterlinck were lionised and spent long periods in France. Maeterlinck's *Pelléas et Mélisande* was turned into an opera by Debussy. Like Georges Simenon, Tintin, Jacques Brel and Johnny Hallyday after him, Maeterlinck became so popular that the French forgot he was not French.

The emblematic painting in the exhibition is one showing Verhaeren and Maeterlinck sitting with André Gide and other French writers. The composition, by the Belgian painter Théo Van Rysselberghe, looks ominously like a turn of the century prototype for the bookish chat-shows which would come to haunt French late night television.

The show should be compulsory viewing for any half-way cultured French person who ever cracked an anti-Belgian joke. But it also carries an important, rather tragic, message for those contemporary Begians who seem bent on dissolving their country. Over and over again, it is apparent that what attracted the French artistic élite to Brussels, apart from the cash, was the richness, the oddness, the freshness, of its dual Flemish-French cultural heritage. It is just this heritage which is now being bureaucratically, dogmatically and pedantically compartmentalised by the present generation of politicians.

Next week we are receiving a state visit from my Belgian godmother, who will be 90 later this year. She despairs of contemporary Belgium but remains a committed Francophile. She is looking forward to coming, she says, because France is "the big sister of Belgium, a wonderful, richly, cultured country etc etc". Her accent remains a give-away but least she is coming by the TGV high-speed train and will not have a red and white numberplate.

John Lichfield

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Russian bogey turns into gold mine for Finns

Trading ties are now booming between two old foes, writes Tony Barber in Lappeenranta

Six years ago, when Communism was collapsing in the former Soviet Union and ordinary Russians began to visit Finland in significant numbers, the shop signs in a town like Lappeenranta sent out an unmistakable message. "Only one Russian at a time in this shop."

These days, the Finnish suspicion that theft is the chief purpose behind Russian tourism has long since passed. Businessmen and shopkeepers in Lappeenranta, which lies in south-east Finland, less than 15 miles from the Russian frontier, now welcome Russians with open arms.

Store owners have started to hire Russian-speaking sales assistants, and shop windows display the sign "Service in Russian here" for the benefit of the thousands of Russians who arrive every week. The phrase "the Russians are coming", which used to strike a particularly sensitive chord in a country that was attacked twice by Stalin's Soviet Union in the Second World War, now has almost entirely positive connotations.

Take Tom Hultin, a Finnish business consultant who went to work in Switzerland in 1991 but moved back to Lappeenranta in 1994. "When I came back, my plan was just to do business with Western companies, but I quickly saw that there were other opportunities," he said.

"The situation here is just excellent. The streets are crowded with Russians at the moment. It's cheaper for them to buy here than in St Petersburg. There are shop owners who would much rather sell to Russians than to me because the Russians don't ask for a discount."

Customs officers on the snowy, tree-lined, Finnish-Russian frontier confirm that there is more human contact than ever before between Finns and Russians. "In 1990, at this border crossing alone, we had a total of 200,000 people going in one direction or the other. Last year it was 1.16 million," said Esa Vuorinen, an inspector at the border checkpoint of Nuijamaa.

For all the boom in Russian business and tourism, Finns in Lappeenranta have memories of different times. The town, which was founded in 1649 by Queen Christina of Sweden, fell into Russian hands in the 18th century. The Tsars left their mark by building a military fortress and a couple of Orthodox churches, whose onion domes stand in sharp contrast to the simple Nordic architecture around them.

> ❝ Shop owners would much rather sell to Russians because they don't ask for a discount ❞

Then there was the Winter War, a dark and searing episode in the Finnish memory. Vyborg, a city which was then the third biggest in Finland, but which is now part of Russia and lies less than an hour's drive from Lappeenranta, was annexed to "Soviet Karelia" as a result of the wars in 1939-40 (the Winter War) and in 1944 that broke out as a result of Stalin's hostility to Finland.

About half a million people, or more than one in 10 of all Finns, were evacuated from the Vyborg area before the Soviet assaults. The loss of Vyborg was a national tragedy, but one that Finns carefully avoided complaining about in the days when a tyrannical Communist monster continued to loom on the eastern border.

It is not surprising, then, that Vyborg still matters to many Finns, even if they think about the lost city in a wistful rather than in a revanchist way.

One elderly couple, who had owned a property in Vyborg before 1939, visited it recently after a 50-year gap and were deeply saddened at the way its post-war Russian occupiers had treated their home. "Shit on the walls, a horrible, horrible smell everywhere, and no sign that anybody had done anything in decades to make the place look nice," was their verdict.

Nevertheless, business with Russia must go on. It is, in some ways, the only and the best option facing the Finns. A company such as Finnrela OY, which is making boilers to heat buildings in Russian cities, has nothing but good things to say about Russia.

"It is an enormous market. But you must have a lot of patience, and you have to be the friend of the Russian customers before it will all work," said Hannu Janhunen, an executive with Finnrela, which is rapidly expanding in Russia in partnership with a British company, Hamsworthy Combustion Engineering.

Like other Westerners, the Finns have plenty of terrifying experiences to recount when they talk about doing business in the new free-market Russia. One Finnish businessman was kidnapped in the Siberian city of Irkutsk, and his family had to pay a ransom of $130,000 (£80,000) to get him back.

However, with their centuries-old knowledge of the Russian character, the Finns believe trade with Russia can only get better. Veli Sundback, executive vice-president with the Helsinki-based Nokia company, said: "I've been following events since the collapse of the Soviet Union, and I think an improvement has taken place."

People power: Members of the landless movement wielding a sickle and machete during the march on Brasilia yesterday Photograph: Reuters

Brazilian peasants march for land

William Schomberg
Reuter

Brasilia — Landless peasants marched into the Brazilian capital to the cheers of more than 25,000 demonstrators in the biggest protest faced by President Fernando Henrique Cardoso.

The demonstrators opposed to Mr Cardoso's pro-market reforms braved a rainstorm to cheer the 1,500 peasants of the Landless Movement (MST) as they filed into Brasilia's massive Ministries Esplanade after a 750-mile march to demand land and justice for colleagues who have lost their lives.

"Comrades, do not give in. We can still dream of a better future," MST leader Joao Pedro Stedile urged protesters waving red flags as left-wing luminaries, trade union leaders and liberal Catholic bishops jostled for space behind him.

The MST has emerged as a new left-wing force in Brazil that has captured the imagination of the public with its high-profile tactic of invading and cultivating unused farmland.

Mr Stedile said the MST would defy calls from the government to give up the occupations which can lead to violence.

"There will be more and more occupations. We don't expect the government to carry out proper land reform programme as an act of generosity," Mr Stedile said.

Brazil has one of the world's worst land-distribution ratios, with about half its arable land in the hands of 2 per cent of landowners.

The struggle for land ownership is also one of the main factors behind Brazil's soaring levels of violence. More than 100 people have been killed in land disputes since Mr Cardoso took office in January 1995.

Thursday's protest marked the first anniversary of the killing by police of 19 peasants demanding land. The massacre heaped criticism from international rights groups on Brazil and spurred Mr Cardoso to declare land reform a priority.

No one has been arrested for that killing, despite television pictures clearly showing police officers firing indiscriminately into the crowd of protestors.

Citizen Caine is just the boyo to revive Bolshevism

Phil Reeves on a Welsh radical who is harking back to the bad old past

Moscow – British politics may have sunk into quibbling over different shades of grey.

The once revolutionary Vanessa Redgrave, as reported on page one, may now be declaring her loyalty to the Liberal Democrats. But Britain can still nurture the occasional pioneering radical.

Kevin Caine, a 31-year-old from north Wales, has embarked on a task more ambitious than anything which the suits jostling for a seat in Westminster have to offer: he's trying to convert Russia back to Bolshevism.

Most weekends Mr Caine is to be found beneath the outstretched arm of a statue of Lenin in the main square of Yekaterinburg, an industrial sprawl on the edge of the Ural mountains where the winter temperatures can drop to -30 C.

The former mechanic, a bearded figure in a leather peaked cap, hawks copies of *The Bolshevik* newspaper and cassettes of rousing North Korean music to passing Russians in the hope that they will eventually turn back the clock to 1917.

He has chosen some of the toughest turf in Russia: the city is Boris Yeltsin's home town.

It seems that Citizen Caine, son of an army officer, who grew up in a 16-room mansion, is not deterred.

Rarely does a Communist march take place in which he is not seen striding along beneath the sea of red banners, calling for the payment of overdue wages and pensions, and an end to the exploitation of the working classes.

Like a latter-day John Reed — the Communist author of *Ten Days that Shook the World*, played by Warren Beatty in the film *Reds* — Mr Caine has penned some patriotic songs which he sings to the accompaniment of his synthesiser, along with stirring refrains including: "Down with Fascism! I want to live".

The story of his arrival in Russia is as romantic as his mission is far-fetched.

He was travelling through Russia a few years ago when he met a Russian woman on a train.

They fell in love and married, and he decided to stay.

As free-market reforms unfolded - and, with them, crime and economic collapse - he became increasingly convinced that the red flag should be hoisted again over Russia.

He is no fan of the capitalist Western press, but his activities were reported this week by the newspaper *Komsomolskaya Pravda*, whose account was confirmed in detail to the *Independent* by his Russian wife and political soulmate, Valentina.

Such is the curiosity about his decision to swap the comforts of the West for the wilds of Russia that two years ago a Russian documentary-maker chose him as the subject of a prize-winning film, *The head of the house, or Kevin Caine in the country of Bolsheviks*.

"At home in England, we only have to press a button to warm up our homes," he declared.

No longer. In his new home town outside Yekaterinburg, he spends hours chopping logs for the stove in his wooden cottage and collecting water from a well.

It is unclear if he feels that the return of Communism would spare him the daily labour.

Past imperfect: A scene from the film *Reds*, with Warren Beatty playing John Reed, who could be a role model for Kevin Caine Photograph: Ronald Grant Archive

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Professor Martin Schwarzschild

Martin Schwarzschild, eminent theoretical and observational astronomer, was a world leader in the theory of stellar structure and evolution and of galactic structure.

Besides writing other important papers on theoretical and observational astronomy, he pioneered the use of space telescopes to obtain sharp photographs from above the Earth's fluctuating atmosphere. His versatility, transparent personal integrity, enthusiasm for ideas and skill in communication made him a very effective advisor on scientific matters, both national and international. He was a worthy son to Karl Schwarzschild, a father he hardly remembered.

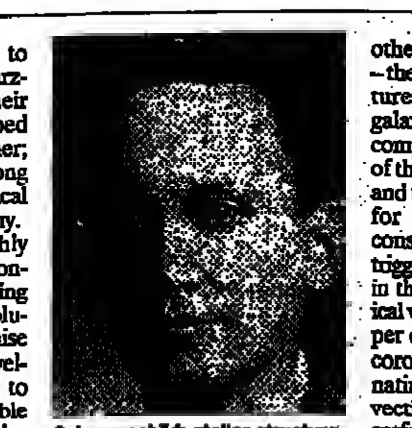
Schwarzschild's early life in some ways typified that of many other German citizens of Jewish stock. His father's family had for centuries lived in the Frankfurt Judengasse. Following emancipation in the 19th century, they entered with enthusiasm into Germany's economic, intellectual and cultural life.

Karl Schwarzschild was a man of genius, who can fairly be described as the father of astrophysics: in just 20-odd years of active research, he introduced many fundamental ideas and methods now commonplace among astronomers. But come 1914, although past 40, and in spite of his distaste for militarism, as a German Jew he felt morally obliged to volunteer, following the German army first into Belgium with a scientific unit, and subsequently onto the Eastern Front. In 1916 he contracted a painful skin disease which killed him, but not before he had written his last scientific papers, including one on ballistics, and the two that are probably his most famous, constructing exact solutions of Einstein's general relativistic field equations.

The young Martin's faint recollections of his father, and the high regard with which his memory was held both in his childhood home at Göttingen and in the astronomical world must have acted as an inspiration rather than an impediment. But his graduation in physics and astronomy coincided with the political triumph of the Nazis, for whom his father's patriotism counted for little. Both Martin Schwarzschild and his elder sister Agathe (subsequently Professor of Classics at Dunedin in New Zealand) were forced into exile. His younger brother, who remained with their "Aryan" mother in Göttingen, was ultimately driven to suicide.

After a year as Research Fellow at Oslo and a brief visit to Britain, Schwarzschild emigrated to the United States in 1937, becoming a citizen in 1942, and serving as a lieutenant with army intelligence. After the war he returned at first to his position as Assistant Professor at Columbia University's Rutherford Observatory. It showed commendable farsightedness on the part of Princeton that when appointing Lyman Spitzer as Professor of Astronomy and successor to H.N. Russell as Director of the Observatory, they agreed to Spitzer's request that Schwarzschild also be appointed. Their fields of work both overlapped and complemented each other; together, they built up a strong graduate school in theoretical and observational astronomy.

Schwarzschild is probably best known for his seminal contributions to our understanding of stellar structure and evolution. He was quick to recognise the power of the newly developed electronic computers to deal with the rather intractable mathematics, and in particular to incorporate the complicated details of the input physics. The culmination of a long series of studies was a landmark paper written jointly with Fred Hoyle, "On the Evolution of Type 2 Stars", published in 1955, which showed convincingly how the evolution due to nuclear processing of initially homogeneous stars would lead naturally to the red giant sequence and the associated short-period pulsating stars, as observed in the globular clusters. But Schwarzschild


Schwarzschild: stellar structure

would not be satisfied with just the output from the computer: he would always want to understand the reasons for numerical predictions in qualitative physical terms. His monograph *Structure and Evolution of the Stars* (1958) has been a standard text for generations of students of all ages.

The same combination of physical insight, computational expertise and an insistence on precision in detail shows in his other main theoretical interest – the dynamics of galactic structure, especially of elliptical galaxies. His skilled use of the computer for the construction of the orbits of individual stars, and the final use of these orbits for synthesizing the self-consistent gravitational field, triggered an explosion of activity in this area. His other theoretical work includes a seminal paper on the heating of the solar corona by shock waves emanating from the turbulent convection zone just below the surface, and a pioneering paper with Martin Kruskal on the instabilities that bedevil laboratory plasmas, for example in potential thermonuclear devices.

Schwarzschild also made many important contributions to observational astronomy. Together with his wife Barbara, he drew attention to the striking differences in chemical composition between respectively high- and low-velocity dwarf stars, crucial to our understanding of the chemical evolution of galaxies. In another seminal paper, he pointed out that optical measurements of the Andromeda galaxy pointed not to rigid rotation but rather to a constant rotational velocity, subsequently confirmed by the radio astronomers as omnipresent in disc-like galaxies, such as our own Milky Way.

However, Schwarzschild's major contribution to observational astronomy was probably through his pioneering use of space telescopes for precise imaging of the Sun, planets and stellar systems. His "Stratoscope I" 12-inch solar telescope, balloon-borne up to 80,000 feet, was the first instrument to obtain sharp photographs of the solar surface. The subsequent "Stratoscope II" three-foot telescope gave similar first-of-a-kind results on the outer planets and galactic nuclei. These experiments were harbingers of the now familiar Hubble Space Telescope, which is set to revolutionise optical astronomy.

It is probably no coincidence that Martin Schwarzschild's heart condition should have become terminal just ten days after the sudden death of Lyman Spitzer, his close colleague and friend for over half a century. Certainly, those many who have enjoyed and profited from the warm hospitality of Princeton University Observatory will feel that an era has truly come to an end.

Leon Mestel

Martin Schwarzschild, astronomer: born Potsdam, Germany 31 May 1912; Research Fellow, Institute of Astrophysics, Oslo 1936-37; Research Fellow, Harvard University Observatory 1937-40; Lecturer, Columbia University 1940-44, Assistant Professor 1944-7; Professor, Princeton University 1947-50, Higgins Professor of Astronomy 1950-79; Vice-President, International Astronomical Union 1964-70; Vice-President, American Astronomical Society 1967-69, President 1970-72; married 1945 Barbara Cherry; died Langhorne, Pennsylvania 10 April 1997.

Roland Topor

Topor was the modern *enfant terrible* of French art and letters, a humorist whose very appearance, always bubbling over with sly merriment, made one laugh.

Like his six-year-younger fellow-writer Arrabal, whom he much resembled, he was short and leprechaun-like, giving the impression of constant, untiring activity. Like Arrabal, he dabbled in films, produced art derived from Surrealism (the former ordered his art by telling a painter exactly what he wanted, while Topor was a trained artist), and could seldom be accused of good taste.

Born in Paris in 1938, the son of Polish Jewish refugees, he spent the war in Savoy and eventually studied at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts. His father had been a conventional painter of landscapes and the son's work is indistinguishable from his in style, but very different in subject matter. Topor's cartoons appeared in many newspapers, most notably *Libération*. Among the films made from his work was Polanski's *The Tenant* (1976).

His greatest success was as a macabre cartoonist. He used his work to illustrate his novels, plays and other writings, produced many volumes of graphics, and exhibited his work widely in galleries both in France and abroad. His drawings in many ways resembled the graphic novels of Max Ernst and

Topor: sly merriment

the similarly grim work of the Alsatian artist Tomi Ungerer, but the humour was always there in the absurd situations he depicted, many based on fantastical images of the deeper associations of sex and erotica, others on pictures that linked mankind to the world of worms and insects or reptiles. Although ebullient in public, it was known among his friends that he had black periods of extreme depression, and the bizarre fantasies that he drew and painted undoubtedly reflected a mind that brooded on death and decay and the many germs and viruses that live in our bodies.

His novels tackled the same themes, cruelty and metamorphosis being depicted in a matter-of-fact, unemotional way, his characters Rabelaisian and his plots stretching the imagination to its limits.

His play *Vinci avait raison* ("Leonardo was Right") was a farcical comedy where a policeman and his wife invite a colleague and family to spend a weekend in their new house, where the lavatories are blocked. Piles of excrement emerge all over the house and only the constipated visiting policeman escapes suspicion: the end of this unusual detective play confounds everyone, but at its Brussels premiere and at a public reading at the Arts Theatre Club in London in English, not many of the audience waited for the end.

Coprophagy is a frequent theme and religion a favourite target in much of his work. Giving offence came so naturally to Topor that he was almost unaware of the shocked reactions he was likely to get, as for instance from the series of dialogues, accompanied by drawings, examining all the possible uses of a baby, starting by nailing one to your front door.

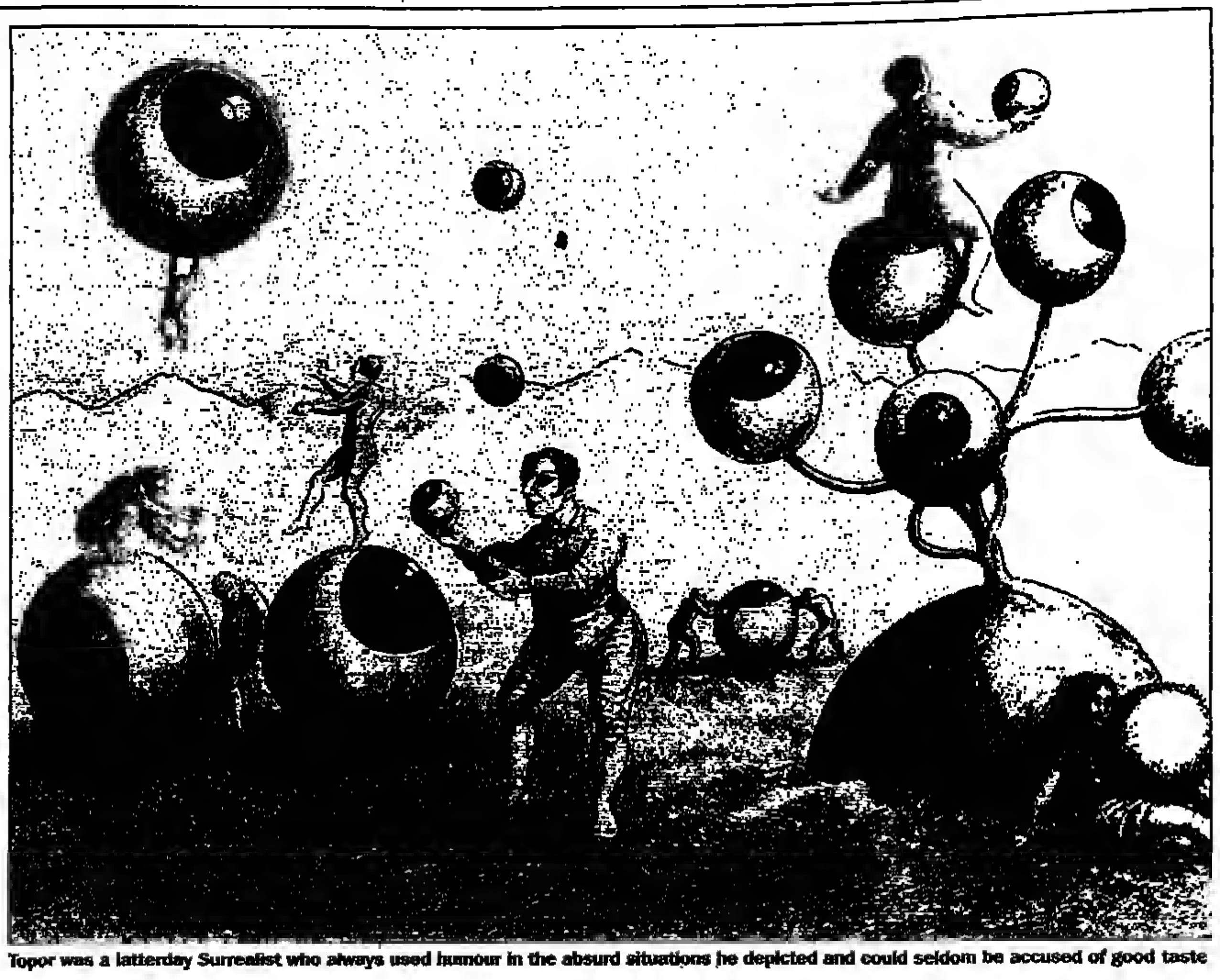
His novels are misnamed, being mainly a string of incidents depicting unusual happenings or strange turns of events, often being little more than an invention that is easier to put into words than a picture. They include *Four Roses for Lucienne*, *Joko's Anniversary* (which appeared in English), *Le Locataire Chimérique*, *Café Panique*, plays, film scripts and a variety of small volumes, appealing to his considerable cult following.

Reactions to him would have been stronger in Britain, although volumes of both graphics and prose appeared here, but he never achieved the special reputation that he enjoyed in France, where the Surrealists had already blunted philistine and taste considerations. He will be regarded historically as a latterday Surrealist, with his reputation as an artist likely to outlive his fame as a writer. France has a tradition of minimalist writing – Max Jacob, André Breton, Aragon and Obaldia are only a few of the names that spring to mind – but there is no British tradition other than a few essay writers like Charles Lamb. In any case, few modern European writers are read in Britain these days.

At the age of 59 Topor suffered a massive stroke and brain haemorrhage, having appeared until then in the best of health. In person he was generous and warm with a large body of friends, who, although they were aware of his black moods, never had to suffer from them.

John Calder

Roland Topor, artist and writer: born Paris 7 January 1938, married (three children); died Paris 16 April 1997.


Topor was a latterday Surrealist who always used humour in the absurd situations he depicted and could seldom be accused of good taste

Harry Ashley

Ashley: the steps of William Barnes

Harry Ashley was a photographer and popular historian of Dorset as well as an authority on the dialect poet William Barnes.

He discovered the beauty of Dorset in 1936, when he became a photographer on the *Dorset County Chronicle*. He liked to recall that an earlier contributor was Thomas Hardy. The young Ashley soon moved to the *Echo* in Bournemouth where, having opted to return after the Second World War, he became the much respected chief photographer serving a total of 40 years.

As an RAF Official War Photographer he provided Britain with the first pictures of the fall of Mandalay and Singapore. He was twice shot down and when it was friendly fire he was out of the plane in seconds to photograph the downed aircraft.

Peacetime in Bournemouth was not dull. In 1946 he was the first on the scene in Branksome Dene Chine when police discovered by moonlight the mutilated body of the ex-Wren Doreen Marshall. She had been murdered by Neville Heath who is now depicted in Madame Tussaud's chamber of horrors. The body had remained undetected under a rhododendron bush for several days because the town police force only searched as far as the borough boundary dividing the valley. Ashley never walked that path again.

He photographed royalty and the stars but unknown to many readers he was never able to photograph the town's greatest annual event. Beales department store was the first shop in the world to have Father Christmas in residence. His arrival, until as recently as 1964, was like a royal visit with streets closed and extra police on duty. For 15 years, Harry Ashley was the very convincing Father Christmas welcomed at Bournemouth Central Station and driven in a horse-drawn carriage at the climax of a long procession to the store where he made a balcony appearance.

Such serious parades are now only found abroad, notably in Holland where St Nicholas is welcomed, and Bournemouth's version had a similar atmosphere. Ashley's girth and personality were perfect for the task which he admitted was "increasingly traumatic and emotional" as requests for special waves for sick children at different points on the route poured in.

Of course, someone else was enthroned in the store for the next few weeks. Ashley liked to recall spending one snowy Christmas Eve evening at the White Hart in Sturminster Newton. A butcher, baker and blacksmith had called for a drink and across the narrow street, children were gathered around the old cross singing carols. This he claimed, "children did when the dialect poet William Barnes went to school here, more than 150 years before."

Ashley was a founder member of the William Barnes Society and author of *In The Steps of William Barnes* (1972) whose name is still known in the county almost as well as Hardy through Ashley's championing.

On Christmas Day and New Year's Eve, he would join fellow Spartans, all-year-round swimmers, for a dip in Poole Bay. As *Yachting Monthly*'s Poole Harbour Correspondent, he was able to highlight the interests of one of the largest natural harbours in the world, where he was instrumental in giving the ancient and largely ignored custom of Beating the Harbour Bounds a high profile. He enjoyed not only planning the land and water event, but also dressing up and performing as an exuberant Poole Pirate.

Many Dorset customs have been recorded in his numerous books such as *The Dorset Village Book* (1984) and *The Dorset Coast: history, lore & legend* (1992). He travelled more than 2,000 miles around the country just for his *Dorset Inns* book (1986) published ten years ago. His twice reprinted *Dorset: a portrait in colour* (1986) was an opportunity for him to return to sites originally photographed in black and white, his favourite medium, during half a century.

Leigh Hatts

Harry William Ashley, photographer and author: born Weymouth 16 June 1917; married 1939 Betty Jordan (one son); died Christchurch, Dorset 29 March 1997.

Births, Marriages & Deaths

MARRIAGES

McKENZIE : HONIGMANN: 12 April 1997, at the Friends' Meeting House, Jordans, Buckinghamshire, Valerie Elizabeth Hewson McKenzie to Andrew Peter Paul Honigmann.

Announcements for Gazette BIRTHS, MARRIAGES & DEATHS should be sent in writing to the Gazette Editor, The Independent, 1 Canada Square, Canary Wharf, London E14 5DL, telephoned to 0171-293 2012 or faxed to 0171-293 2010, and are charged at £6.50 a line (VAT extra). OTHER Gazette announcements must be submitted in writing (or faxed) and are charged at £10 a line, VAT extra.

ROYAL ENGAGEMENTS

TODAY: **The Duke of York**, Patron, Fight for Sight, opens the Optrafair 97 Trade Exhibition at the National Exhibition Centre, Birmingham. **Prince Edward**, President, attends a reception followed by the premiere of *Bandstand* given by the National Youth Music Theatre at Peterborough Cathedral, Cambridgeshire. TOMORROW: **The Queen** takes the salute at the St George's Day Parade of Queen's Scouts in the Quadrangle of Windsor Castle.

Changing of the Guard

TODAY: The Household Cavalry Mounted Regiment mounts the Queen's Life Guard at **Horse Guards**, 11am; 1st Battalion The Royal Regiment of Wales mounts the Queen's Guard at **Buckingham Palace**, 11.30am, band provided by the Coldstream Guards. TOMORROW: The Household Cavalry Mounted Regiment mounts the Queen's Life Guard at **Horse Guards**, 11am; 1st Battalion Scots Guards mounts the Queen's Guard at **Buckingham Palace**, 11.30am, band provided by the Coldstream Guards.

Forthcoming marriages

Mr M. T. G. Cobb and Miss C. L. Chegwin

The engagement is announced between Matthew, only son of the Rev and Mrs Peter Cobb, of Tal-y-coed, Monmouthshire, and Celia, only daughter of Mr and Mrs Robert Chegwin, of Cyncoed, Cardiff.

Birthdays

TODAY: Mr William Baillie, painter and president, Royal Scottish Academy, 74; The Most Rev Luigi Barbarito, Apostolic Pro-Nuncio, 75; Miss Sue Barker, tennis player, 41; Mr Algy Cluff, chairman and chief executive, Cluff Mining, 57; Mr Adrian Coles, director-general, Building Societies Association, 43; Mr Tim Curry, actor, 51; Mr Glyn England, former chairman, Windcluster Ltd, 76; Sir Cyril English, educationist, 84; Mr Trevor Francis, footballer, 43; Sir Denis Henry, a Lord Justice of Appeal, 66; Sir John Horlock, Professor of Engineering, Open University, 69; Mrs Margo MacDonald, broadcaster, 53; Mr Dudley Moore, actor, 62; Mr Garfield Morgan, actor, 66; Mr Hugh O'Brian, actor, 72; Mr Murray Perahia, pianist, 50; Mr Alan Price, singer, 55; Sir John Roch, a Lord Justice of Appeal, 63; M Michel Roux, chef de cuisine, 56; Mr Peter Scott QC, 62; Mr Wilf Stevenson, director, British Film Institute, 50; Miss Ruby Wax, actress, writer and television presenter, 44; Mr Philip Wroughton, Lord-Lieutenant for Berkshire, 64.

TOMORROW: Professor Derek Bowett QC, former president, Queens' College, Cambridge, 70; Mr Michael Brandon, actor, 52; Mr Ray Brooks, actor, 58; Sir Geoffrey Chipperfield, former civil servant, 64; The Right Rev Frederick Darwent, former Bishop of Aberdeen and Orkney, 70; Mr Richard de Lange, chairman and managing director, Philips Electronics UK, 52; Maj-Gen Sir Charles Dunphie, former chairman, Vickers, 95; Miss Nina Foch, actress, 73; Mr Graeme Fowler, cricketer, 40; Sir Arnold France, former chairman, Board of Inland Revenue, 86; Mr John Eliot Gardiner, conductor, 54; Mr Mauricio Gugelmin, racing driver, 34; Mr Paul Heiney, writer and broadcaster, 48; Miss Louise Jameson, actress, 46; Mr Andrew Jaspan, former editor, the *Observer*, 45; Sir Antony Jay, author and scriptwriter, 67; Mr Eddie Kulukundis, theatrical producer, 65; Miss Jessica Lange, actress, 48; Mr Nicholas Lyndhurst, actor, 36; Mr Ryan O'Neal, actor, 56; Mr Rodger Pannone, solicitor, and former president of the Law Society of England and Wales, 54; Mr Leslie Phillips, actor, 73; Sir John Quicke, agriculturist, 75; Mr Richard Rhodes, Headmaster, Rossall School, Lancashire, 55; Mr Christopher Robinson, organist and director of music, St John's College, Cambridge, 61; Mr Peter Snow, broadcaster, 59; Miss Jean Southworth QC, chairman, Police Discipline Appeals Tribunal, 71; Mr Luther Vandross, soul singer, 46; Air Marshal Sir Richard Wakeford, 75; Mr Henry Wrong, director, European Arts Foundation, 67.

Anniversaries

TODAY: **Births:** Lucien Lévy-Bruhl, philosopher, 1857; Jayne Mansfield, actress, 1933. **Deaths:** Anton van Diemen, colonial administrator, 1645; George Gordon Noel Byron, Lord Byron, poet, 1824; Benjamin Disraeli, Earl of Beaconsfield, statesman and novelist, 1881; Charles Robert Darwin, biologist, 1882; Frankie Howerd, comedian, 1993. **On this day:** Sir Francis Drake sailed into the harbour of Cadiz and sank the Spanish fleet at harbour – "singeing the King of Spain's beard", 1587; Prince Rainier III of Monaco married the actress Grace Kelly, 1956. **Today is the Feast Day of** St Alphege or Elphege of Canterbury, St Expeditus, St Geroldus and St Leo IX, Pope.

TOMORROW: **Births:** Adolf Hitler, dictator, 1889; Harold Lloyd, comedian, 1893; Joan Miró, abstract painter, 1893. **Deaths:** Antonio Canaletto, painter, 1768; Abraham (Bram) Stoker, theatre manager and author of *Dracula*, 1912. **On this day:** Captain James Cook discovered New South Wales, Australia, 1770; President Richard Nixon announced that 150,000 troops would be withdrawn from Vietnam, 1970. **Today is** the Feast Day of St Agnes of Montepulciano, St Caedwalla, St Hildegund, St Marcellinus of Embrun, St Marcian or Marian of Auxerre and St Peter of Verona.

Lectures

TODAY

National Gallery: Julia Tozer, "Cruelty and Kindness (iii): Puvis de Chavannes, *The Beheading of Saint John the Baptist*", 12pm.

Victoria and Albert Museum: Linda Woolley, "Tread Softly: shoes and boots from the V&A's Collection", 2.30pm.

Tate Gallery: Laurence Bradbury, "Ingenious Additions to Orthodox Techniques", 1pm.

British Museum: Lorna Oakes, "Sumerian Cities", 1.15pm.

Royal Academy of Arts, London W1: Dinos and Jake Chapman, John Stezaker, Sarah Kent, "Monstrosity and Sexuality", 7pm.

TOMORROW

Tate Gallery: Laurence Bradbury, "Scales of Success: miniature to monumental", 2.30pm.

National Portrait Gallery: Sally Bradshaw, Timothy West and Michael Haslam, "George Frideric Handel: the man and his music", 3pm.

The power of praying by numbers

faith & reason

An experiment to discover if prayer aids the recovery of heart patients may well prove positive, argues Paul Handley, editor of the *Church Times*, but other kinds of healing are just as important

There is that moment in countless films when our hero is lying on the operating table. The blips from the monitor in the corner begin to falter. "We're losing him, Dr Ferguson, we're losing him!" Beads of perspiration appear on the surgeon's troubled brow. "There's one last thing I can try: but I'll need your help, nurse."

What that last thing is I never know. Since the age of six I have fainted at the very mention of blood, and my eyes will have been closed long before this scene began. So for all I know, the operating theatre staff assume an attitude of prayer, on their knees around the endangered patient. Miraculously, this being the movies, the blip starts up again.

This being real life, though, what happens when a similar technique is attempted? We might soon be able to find out. The Templeton Foundation, an organisation set up by a Wall Street millionaire to fund progress in religion, is sponsoring an experiment to judge the effect of prayer on heart patients in three American hospitals. Two groups of 600 patients will be told that they might be prayed for, though only one group actually will be. A third group will know that they are being prayed for. The medical staff will be kept in the dark, merely keeping a record of all the patients' progress over a two-year period.

There are several methodological problems for the research team to overcome. The first, which I should have thought pretty basic, is the lack of a fourth, control group, made up of 600 people who believe they are not being prayed for and don't particularly want to be. Otherwise the effect of believing that one is possibly being prayed for cannot be gauged.

Second, there is what the researchers call, disparagingly, "background noise", meaning extraneous prayers from the patients and their relatives. This being the case, the experiment will be measuring the effect, not of the presence or absence of prayer, but of different degrees of prayer.

Another, slight, worry for the research team is that their activities might just incur divine displeasure. "Do not put the Lord your God to the test," said Moses, quoted by Jesus in the wilderness, or, as Alexander Pope put it, rather more elegantly, "presume not God to scan". Perhaps they need to make clear that this is a statistical experiment, not a challenge, and no patients will be put at risk in order to goad God into intervening.

Despite all this, my prediction is that the experiment will suggest that prayer does work. Those who know they are being prayed for will score, say, 20 per cent higher on whatever scale is used: survival rate, speed of recovery, etc. Those who have been prayed for without their knowledge will score 15 per cent higher. This is not quite wild speculation. A similar experiment with heart patients in the mid-1980s is reported to have shown that the prayed-for patients did significantly better "on several outcome measures".

But if so, what will be the consequences? The first, this being America, is that the grieving relatives of any of the unprayed-for and by-then-dead patients will sue the researchers for negligence. The second is that researchers will make a fat living attempting to pinpoint which types of prayer were the ones that worked, and then trying them on different diseases. The third is that an eager group will try to "mormonise" the world, collecting the names and biographical details of whole nations in order to heal everybody for Christ.

Finally, another group, with me in it, will ask these interceders just what they intend to do to support the hundreds of thousands of people, in developing countries, for instance, whose lives they have extended by their prayers. For if God invites us to participate in one part of the work of recreating and redeeming the world, he wants us to share in the whole lot. In fact, a bit more effort put into the normal means of keeping people alive – such as providing food and clean water, preventing bloodshed, trading fairly – might be more the sort of healing that God had in mind.

Death and the means of death are part of God's purpose for us all, whether prayed about or not. An experiment that makes this uncomfortable fact more difficult to grasp, by suggesting a miraculous alternative, does nobody any good.

Faith & Reason is edited by Paul Vallely

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THE INDEPENDENT

FOUNDED 1986

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The Tories' puerile propaganda demeans us all

Like a gang of Fifties schoolboys sniggering over a pornographic magazine, the "ideas merchants" of Conservative Central Office must have flicked through their dog-eared stock of anti-European images. The weird fantasy they came up with was published yesterday – a Teutonic giant. There, in the Tory ads, was a gross, balefully grinning Helmut Kohl, the Federal Chancellor. He balanced a diminutive Tony Blair on his knee and the copy asked – sensitive and sophisticated, you will agree – who was going to be "man" enough to take on the Prussian Goliath. What a farrago. What a welter of sexual innuendo, Germanophobia and nationalist posturing.

As a piece of political imagining, Edwina Currie's judgement was spot on. "Puerile," she said; she might have added, this is the politics of little English boys in short trousers. But this stunt is not to be written off as just another jolly jape. How a political party goes about getting elected, or re-elected, is not a private matter. Images stick. What is said and done in Britain registers abroad, in banks and stock exchanges as well as foreign offices and party headquarters. People in other countries might confuse the outpourings of a desperate party with the general views of British people and in that way Tory tactical opportunism taints us all.

As for the "dummy", Tony Blair can take care of himself. However he is portrayed, big or small, he has the hustings on which to speak and a publicity machine to amplify his voice. If he has any sense he will not stoop to the Tories' level, but in the face of the provocation of their advertisement showing him as a diminutive puppet sitting on Chancellor Kohl's knee, he has every right to respond in kind. Perhaps this Tory ploy will inject something into Labour's campaign that has hitherto been missing – anger.

But for the German leader, there is no ready come-back. The Federal Republic's embassy in London is polite, far too polite. In Bonn they prefer the "cool" line, dismissing both tabloid and Tory attacks on Germany as mere eccentricities. Yet they too ought to be angry. That the Christian Social Union or the Christian Democrats would ever portray a foreign leader in their electoral posters and advertisements is inconceivable. And that point can be generalised. In what other Western country would a contender for national office coldly and deliberately insult the head of state of a friendly neighbour?

The point is not that the Christian Democrats and the Conservatives are both right-of-centre parties and have in the past co-operated in the European Parliament; nor even that it is barely four weeks since the Foreign Secretary Malcolm Rifkind was in Bonn addressing the CDU's think-tank as if talking to kindred spirits. All that says is the latter-day Tory party has no manners; it is the impolite party.

What is going on here is the substitution of stereotype for argument, propaganda for reasoned discussion. The Conservatives do have substantive differences with the CDU and its leader, Chancellor Kohl. John Major *et al* disagree with his views on the development of the European Union. All that is understood. But it should lead to engagement, debate, the exchange of perspectives, not to personalisation of the kind represented by this advertisement. Such failure to argue is a mark of the Conservatives' political decadence. (Perhaps it also demonstrates their conviction that they have indeed lost the election. For what party, knowing it might within weeks have to engage with Chancellor Kohl across negotiating tables in Maastricht and Amsterdam, would insult him in this way?)

You do not have to be a Freudian to read into this portrayal of the Chancellor and the German nation elements of some primitive fear in Tory guts about being swallowed up. The Tories, an analyst fresh from reading the Grimm Brothers might say, fear becoming the giant's supper. They focus their anxieties on a superhuman figure ... but too much of that and we could sound like Leo Abse. More prosaically and more dangerously, what this advertisement bears witness to is the Conservatives' failure to emancipate themselves from the clinging mud of wartime history. Here are echoes of that old, British military identity which is such a ready source of assurance for those who fear the present. Put a *Pickelhaube* on Helmut Kohl's head (something readers of the advertisement are clearly being invited to do) and everything falls into place. He'll eat your babies and, given half a chance, shoot Edith Cavell. Britain triumphed against the Hun, against Hitler and will triumph again against Helmut!

This is the thought process of people who, at some level, fear themselves. They certainly do not trust in the capacity of Britain to meet the diplomatic, financial and commercial challenges of the next few years. There is something unmanly about all this, using that word in its old-fashioned sense.

Conservatives, *in extremis*, have behaved badly before. The great Churchill, in 1945, was not above hysterically warning that Clement Attlee would head a Gestapo if Labour were elected. Conservative high command condoned if it did not itself instigate the notorious forged Zinoviev letter in 1924. A crudely executed newspaper advertisement hardly compares, except that never before would the Conservatives have so exposed their weakness. Would Margaret Thatcher ever have approved a public display of insecurity? Whatever she might have said in private about the Germans, she would surely never have exposed her party to the charge that the Tory posture on Europe is one of fear as well as loathing.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Ministers' children give clue to our unfair school system

Sir: Your election report "Heseltine seeks state schools fit for Tories" (16 April) struck a chord. Mr Heseltine asserts: "The important thing is that we are setting targets nationally for this country to be at the top of world education levels". Thus, presumably, all state schools will provide education of such excellence that the private sector will wither on the vine.

The chord which struck was school fees. The information on the fees cabinet ministers pay to keep their children out of the state system for which they have responsibility will be alien music to the ears of the parents of the school in which I teach. Our school, serving areas of high unemployment and multiple deprivation but high in teacher commitment and parental esteem, is about to close as a consequence of government cuts. The cost of each pupil's education is £800 per term.

We are deemed uneconomic. Ours is the uneconomic cost of addressing the needs of the seriously disadvantaged. Cabinet ministers are paying fees between £1,500 and £4,600 per term to address the needs of the already significantly advantaged. If they are genuinely interested in setting targets of excellence ministers might begin by setting funding targets for the disadvantaged at levels closer to those of the advantaged.

DANIEL McDONALD
Dundee

Sir: Where politicians send their children probably says more about them and the state of the nation than one day's worth of electioneering. I was fortunate enough to attend school with Peter Kohl, the son of the German Federal Chancellor.

You might wonder how much my parents had to fork out so I could attend this august institution. The answer is, nothing: the Lieselotte-Gymnasium is our local state-run grammar school.

ALFRED RINALDI
London SE1

Art without the mysticism

Sir: John Pope-Hennessey's idea, quoted by James Hall (Letters, 12 April), that use of life masks in portrait busts introduced "an interpretative element", and the latter's gloss that "it forced the artist to give the depicted body a soul", is typical art-speak mysticism.

The point about merely reproducing the shapes of "ready-mades", no matter the materials used, is whether it is really inventive, and shows anything of deep importance and interest, when it ducks the hard-won lessons and insights – including those about perception itself – acquired through the observational and analytical demands usually associated with artistic practice, and notably with painting and drawing skills.

Nowadays, the literal copying of sources or references, as in casts and "academic" art, is a poor device for addressing, and casting light on, our complex, social, cultural, ideological, landscape. The artistic bankruptcy of the jelly-mould, pseudo avant garde – Antony Gormley, Rachel Whiteread, Marc Quinn etc. – is that it relies on an easy and limited formula, and on the facile principle of "defamiliarisation" or "making strange". This conveniently skirts the more difficult, discriminating, but complementary, task of familiarising the viewer with unfamiliar things that matter – new and perceptive ideas, experience.

DAVID RODWAY
Lecturer in Art and Philosophy
Kensington and Chelsea College
London SW10

Sir: David Lister ("When treasure becomes a burden", 16 April) questions whether "it makes long-term practical sense" to honour strictly the terms of a bequest. As guardians of Sir Denis Mahon's proposed bequest, the National Art Collections Fund has a clear view on this.

We firmly believe that, as long as it is possible, the clearly expressed stipulations of a testator should be respected: such acts of generosity cannot be taken for granted. There really is a danger that (to use David Lister's words) "bequests to British galleries might dry up, if benefactors fear that their dying wishes will be overturned".

Sir NICHOLAS GOODISON
Chairman
The National Art Collections Fund
London SW7

Sir: Your correspondent Mr Voremberg (letter, 16 April) has got his facts wrong about access to the Government Art Collection (GAC).

The GAC is a working collection of some 12,000 works of art on view in 500 government buildings in 300 cities at home and abroad. At any one time between 75 and 80 per cent are on display, serving the national interest by showing British cultural achievements to a wide and international audience.

Individual works in the collection can be viewed by interested persons, by appointment, on the same basis as the listed works in private hands about which Mr Voremberg wrote. Indeed GAC staff will make every effort to obtain viewing access to GAC works in British embassies abroad, subject to common-sense considerations of security.

JOHN TUSA
Chairman
Advisory Committee on the Government Art Collection
Department of National Heritage
London W1

Ruthless gangster: magpies are flourishing as other birds decline

Save songbirds from hedgerow killer

Sir: The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds and the British Trust for Ornithology should be concerned about the decline in the populations of our native song and other birds (report, 16 April).

While pesticides should take some of the blame, why do none of the people who carry out these population surveys notice that the loss in small native birds seems to be balanced, if not out-performed by the huge rise in the magpie population? Magpies have become as common as any bird in towns and cities and ruthlessly destroy other birds' eggs and eat their young. I have watched the five magpies who now visit my garden in a gang systematically "work" a hedgerow and eradicate other birds' young.

The old poem said "one for sorrow". If I were a bullfinch, green finch or any other native nesting bird, seeing only one magpie would fill me with positive relief. When will the RSPB and BTO stop sitting around measuring population falls and take radical action to encourage a cull of the magpie population?

S G ARMSTRONG
Orford, Kent

Shocked by this farcical election

Sir: As a 19-year-old I will be voting for the first time and I want to make an informed choice. Foolishly, I thought one of the best ways to do this would be to watch the party election broadcasts on the television and discover what the parties had to offer.

Instead I find a slanging match. When I thought things couldn't get any worse I discovered that a "chicken" had been stalking Tony Blair. (Isn't there a law against that sort of thing?)

The 1997 election is a farce, which does not bode well for the next four years, no matter which party is victorious.

GILLIAN MARY BUZZARD
Leeds

Sir: I would vote for whichever party banned those infuriating little stickers which are glued on all apples.

PETER M SCOTT
Watford, Hertfordshire

Union Flag flies over the Pacific

Sir: The report (16 April) on the saga of Tuvalu's flag contains a serious error. Although the former Latasi government changed the national flag, abandoning the one which incorporated the Union Flag, it did not drop the Queen as Tuvalu's head of state. And the original flag – now restored – has not a yellow background but a light blue one.

Apropos of flags, it is remarkable that although, following the military coups in 1987, Fiji became a republic and its Commonwealth membership lapsed, the Union Flag has firmly remained in the corner of the national flag – and, moreover, the Queen's head has been retained on Fiji's currency. Their retention carries a wistful political message, reflecting the strong sentiments of respect and affection for their former Sovereign still felt by the people of Fiji.

ROGER BARLTROP
Pacific Islands Society
Hurstpierpoint,
West Sussex

Class-ridden trains from the airport

Sir: The good news is that National Express, as operator of Gatwick Express, has ordered £100m worth of new trains (report, 15 April). The bad news is that the operator proposes to segregate the passengers into three classes for a 25-minute run. The present two-class system already causes enough confusion among visitors unfamiliar with our preoccupation with unnecessary class distinctions. This service, at least, should be one-class.

A train is not a plane, and should not pretend to be; the relaxed, open environment of a well-designed train should come as a welcome contrast to the relatively cramped conditions of an aircraft. The last thing a passenger wants when trying to unwind after a flight is more of the same.

DAVID MARKHAM
London N3

Saintly tally

Sir: Val Kilmer ("Latter Day Saint", 17 April) is not the third actor to play Simon Templar. You are forgetting George Sanders at least.

JOHN THOMPSON
Maghull,
Merseyside

National Theatre tours the world

Sir: I fail to understand how the National can be said to be "upstaged" by the RSC tour plans (report, 16 April). By the end of this year we will have toured four large-scale productions to 15 venues in England, Wales and Scotland and four other productions to Holland, Greece, Germany and Ireland: we will also have mounted a twelve-week world tour, staged two productions in New York, and toured a small-scale production to 19 theatres in Britain.

In addition, we are responsible for BT National Connections, a partnership scheme with 10 regional theatres, in which 144 youth groups from all over the UK participate, culminating in 12 performances in the Olivier and Cottesloe in July.

I don't know if this activity is sufficiently "rock'n'roll" for your correspondent, but if the RSC has equally ambitious plans, Britain is being well served by its two national theatre companies.

Sir RICHARD EYRE
Artistic Director
Royal National Theatre
London SE1

Standing up for exploited garment workers

Sir: We welcome the news (report 15 April) that a US presidential task force, which includes major US names such as Nike and Liz Claiborne, has become involved in drawing up a code of employment conduct to end the worst abuses of workers in the garment industry.

Trade union research has uncovered terrible practices carried out in factories in Central America and Asia which include punishing women by forcing them to stand with chairs above their heads for hours on end, or making them work 24-hour shifts without pay. Unfortunately these types of practices are all too common.

A Code of Conduct based on international labour standards is a step in the right direction, but in order to operate properly must be independently monitored, and the trade unions which represent the workers at the factories must be involved. Current schemes where "independent" monitoring teams visit factories in the presence of company management to quiz workers about their rights, and then go back and report that they have no complaints, are clearly not adequate.

The key question will be in the details of how the monitoring is carried out, and who will vet the monitors. If major multinationals are serious in their attempts to clean up the industry, trade unions must have a role in setting up the system, and the International Labour Organisation's technical assistance must be brought in to advise. This will help to guarantee consumers and the public that the goods they buy are being made under decent working conditions.

BILL JORDAN
General Secretary
International Confederation of Free Trade Unions
Brussels

Don't blame us Pagans for vandalism in church

Sir: I was surprised at the tone of your report "Pagan worship suspected in church", (16 April). Paganism is not anti-Christian or against any other religion. We tend to worship in woods and other places close to nature rather than buildings.

My sympathy is extended to the vicar and his congregation at Crowborough for this desecration of their sacred place. I can only conjecture who might be responsible – Satanists are a possibility, and are an anti-Christian cult. (We cannot worship the Devil since he is part of a Christian mythos that we do not follow.) Alternatively, it could be bad old-fashioned vandalism. Either way, it is unlikely that Pagans would be breaking one of our three most cherished principles – "and it harm none".

PETE JENNINGS
Pagan Federation National Spokesperson
London WC1

Letters should be addressed to Letters to the Editor, The Independent, One Canada Square, Canary Wharf, London E14 5DL (Fax: 0171-293 2056; e-mail: letters@independent.co.uk) and include a daytime telephone number. Letters may be edited for length and clarity. We regret we are unable to acknowledge unpublished letters.

LETTER *from* THE EDITOR

There has been much criticism, not least in these pages, about *The Observer*'s sacking of Will Self, the gaunt and sometime drug-abusing novelist: Suzanne Moore made an eloquent argument on his behalf, and as someone who uses him as a babysitter, she should know. And yet, I am not so sure. My problem is not that I think journalists should be people of spotless reputation – rather the reverse – but that the whole culture which links drink 'n' drugs to fine writing has such a rotten record.

On the literary side, there are very few serious druggies who are readable. From the enormously tedious de Quincey to the grotesquely overrated William Burroughs, via the pathetic decline of F Scott Fitzgerald, drug habits have more often tended to ruin potentially great writers than make them. Good writing tends to involve huge concentration and long hours of grindingly hard work, not the few brilliant phrases flung down in the middle of the night of the drug-artist myth. I thought *Trainspotting* by Irvine Welsh was very good, but then again I suspect the man had a secret and hidden habit – sitting down at a table for many hours at a time with copious supplies of paper, tea and toast. (Given his reputation, I guess that's a serious libel.)

You may object: but Self has been fired as a journalist, and when has journalism ever had anything to do with fine writing? Fair point, oh Reader, though there are a fair few phrase-spinners in the trade even so. But even journalism has improved since the days when serious alcohol abuse from 11am onwards was considered a necessary qualification. Journalistic romantics who look back fondly on the days when would-be Brendan Behans poured out of Fleet Street pubs to spin some golden paragraphs should go back and look at what actually got written. The "pissed old hack" of *Private Eye* fame produced golden streams, no doubt, but rarely, I fear, of prose.

The best campaign comment so far comes from a fine writer and wit whose indulgences have not, so far as I know, been chiefly chemical, the vaguely aristocratic American liberal Gore Vidal. Asked about the relative right-wingness of the Tory and Labour parties, Vidal magnificently growled: "I do not come to Lilliputia with a measuring stick." This has caused some offence among the Lilliputians, but they fail to understand the Vidal humour. This was, after all, the man who coined the essential thought that "whenever a friend succeeds, a little something in me dies" and who savagely dismissed America's astronauts while they were being regarded as national heroes, as "Rotarians in outer space". British politics escapes him lightly.

> From the tedious de Quincey to the grotesquely overrated William Burroughs, drug habits have more often tended to ruin great writers

And finally ... every editor has weak spots and blind spots. We have an excellent and witty fashion team here: on Tuesday, Melanie Rickey wrote a wonderful piece about Stella McCartney, the latest British designer to take over a big Paris fashion house. But I have to admit I struggle vainly to understand the whole business. All those bizarre clothes, those unexpected bulges of flesh, those spikes and gold lamé thongs. They look odd enough when draped around some of the most beautiful people in the world; they would be frankly hilarious when worn by the rest of us. I don't know whether it's Maoism or Presbyterianism that prompts the thought, but wouldn't things be far more satisfactory if we all wore standard-issue blue pyjamas. Though, come to think of it, as a besuited middle-aged man, that's roughly what I do wear.

Andrew Marr

QUOTE UNQUOTE

If I had said 'I'm frightfully sorry, that's a very interesting question but I'd better go and ask Ken Clarke or Joe Bloggs or someone else before I give you an answer' – that's not the way I operate – **John Major**, *on his failure to tell the Chancellor of his decision to offer a free vote on the European single currency*

Due to the disillusionment of the House on 8 April 8, we are endeavouring to clear all outstanding accounts – *Letter sent by the Commons Finance Office to retiring MPs and others*

New York is the most realistic place to grow up in, because everybody's got their own problems and they don't care about yours – **Mary J Blige**, *'queen' of hip-hop*

In a real sense the nuns are dead already. They are simply clearing a pathway to God. The idea is that if there is a God and you empty your mind of the clutter of existence, then you might just catch Him – **Fiona Shaw**, *actress, after two weeks in a convent*

It does show a bit of cheek – they wouldn't dress him up as Mohammed for fear of insulting people – **The Rev John Richardson**, *of the evangelical Reform Group, commenting on a painting of Eric Cantona depicted as Jesus Christ, after Piero Della Francesca's 'Resurrection of Christ'*

Imagine a big trough with 15 snouts in it taking what they can get – that's the common fisheries policy – **Mike Townsend**, *chairman of the National Federation of Fishermen's Organisations*

Is Peter Mandelson as good as he thinks?

The left loathes him. Many on the right won't go near him. Why, then, does Tony Blair trust Labour's director of communications so totally? Neil Lyndon asks if he's a genius or just a master flatterer

"If we lose, I crawl off into a hole somewhere, never to be heard of again. If we win, then the proper business of my life begins with Labour in government."

Nobody understands more perfectly and precisely than Peter Mandelson that this election is all-or-nothing time for Peter Mandelson.

In the 1992 election, he was the man who couldn't lose. Though he had been Labour's head of communications from 1985 to 1989 and responsible for the Red Rose campaign of Neil Kinnock's first defeat in 1987, Mandelson had removed himself from operational responsibility for the 1992 campaign. He concentrated instead on cultivating his Hartlepool constituency and on becoming elected for the first time as an MP. If Kinnock had won, Mandelson could have counted on junior office with an expectation of rapid promotion. But, given a safe seat, he was the only member of Kinnock's inner coterie who could be sure to have any kind of political job if the leader lost. So it was.

It's different this time. May Day 1997 is do or die for Mandelson, crack of doom or gates of paradise. If Blair wins, Peter Mandelson will be made. Certain of senior office, he will become one of the most powerful people in Britain. In the next five years, he might even realise his life-long ambition and become foreign secretary. If Blair should lose, the blame will be Mandelson's as much as anybody's.

As Dennis Skinner's *bête noire*, as Clare Short's "man in the dark", as the most seriously, unassuageably hated individual in Blair's circle, Mandelson would cop all the heat for a Labour defeat and he would deserve it. His, above all, has been the determining voice in Labour's electoral strategy for the past two years. His was the decision to abandon the wider electorate and concentrate campaigning efforts on the 200,000-odd voters in key marginals.

He took the lead in Clintonising Blair, from policy-wonker to baby-kisser. Master of Millbank Towers, Supreme Controller of the banks of fax machines and the racks of pagers, it was Mandelson who calculated that Labour's best chance of victory lay in saying nothing and doing less. Given Blair's 30-point lead in the polls, Labour could only lose support by making policy declarations.

The more precisely they announced their plans, the more voters would decide that they didn't like what they heard. Nothing could be gained by an open airing and a detailed discussion of policies but everything could be lost. "Careless tongues cost votes" became the watchword of Millbank Tower. Labour's director of communications became the dictator of non-communication.

The strategy will probably succeed. Blair's lead is still widening in some polls and may be unassailable. Only two weeks of torture on the rack of uncertainty remain for the most calculating man in British public life. He probably couldn't take much more.

Thin as a marathon runner, gaunt as a saint, his body and face are showing his pains. He hasn't drunk any alcohol since New Year's Eve. Won't touch coffee. Drinks a glass of water with a slice of lemon for breakfast. Doesn't do lunches or dinners with journalists. Sleeps less than Margaret Thatcher during the Falklands war. He knows that the supreme moment in the life of Peter Mandelson is at hand. Despite his denials ("I'm not important. I don't matter. I can't see why anybody should be interested in me; and what they write is such crap anyway"), the destiny of the nation as it will be determined on 1 May matters to Peter Mandelson because it will settle his own. The two are one.

Though he is often – usually – described as "sinister", nobody who knows him doubts the effectiveness of Mandelson's skills as a personal operator. Ruthless, vengeful, bullying, flattering, driven, serpentine and crafty, he possesses as full an array of natural gifts for personal advancement as a Lloyd George, a Macmillan or a Wilson. He is also sober.

Two questions, two doubts, do hang constantly in the air around him, however. How good is he at his work? And why does Tony Blair seem to trust him so unreservedly?

As a politician, Peter Mandelson has made his name and his reputation as Labour's supremely effective, calculating, professional media sharpie, the one who knows how to work, cow and corral the journalists, who understands image-making, who feels in his bones the culture of media politics. Despite disasters such as the Sheffield rally of 1992 (Mandelson's gig), the legend is now fixed – and it will become immemorial if Labour wins on 1 May – that the party's media operations were clueless until Mandelson arrived in Walworth Road in time for the 1987 election and that he has professionalised them, out-Saatchiing the Tories, duncing the Lib Dems. He is both praised and damned for the Americanisation of the Labour Party, with its computerised hit-lists of target voters, its telephone-blitzings, its message centres paging shadow ministers.

According to Sidney Blumenthal, author of *The Permanent Campaign*, Clinton-watcher and New York crony of Mandelson, those who suppose that Mandelson got his media style from the Democrats' 1990s campaigns are making the wrong guess.

"I think Peter was on to it long before the Clinton campaign," says Blumenthal. "He had been thinking about and working on the power of symbols and the business of media management since even before the Red Rose and the Hugh Hudson film of the Eighties. What he brings to the new technology of political culture is not, primarily, a technocratic interest but the classical skills of a politician which he has adapted to that culture."

Blumenthal believes that Mandelson is "so sharp, so smart" that he would have done well in American politics, if he had been born there, even though the promotional budgets and political complexities of British media managers are tiddling compared with US presidential or even gubernatorial campaigns. But the "classical skills" Blumenthal identifies in Mandelson may, in fact, diminish and inhibit his effectiveness as a party political operator.

Mandelson, rated by many for his dazzling intellect, is acknowledged as a clever and shrewd analyst of the political scene. He has friends in high places across the spectrum, including prominent Tories. One newspaper editor who knows Mandelson well said: "In good form, he can be witty and highly entertaining. An evening with him can be one of the best nights out in London. But cross him and he is ice-cold."

A Labour insider says: "He gets up noses to a fantastic degree." That may explain why, as another key Labour supporter observed: "Mandelson makes false friends and deadly serious, permanent enemies."

An anecdotal vignette may light up this question.

In London in January, Peter Mandelson was the principal speaker and whipper-in of cash at a fund-raising gathering of rich Labour supporters. Most of the usual suspects among the small body of Millionaires for Blair had been rounded up. Sir David Puttnam had taken a lead in organising the evening. Greg Dyke, Melvyn Bragg, Clive Hollick and Jeremy Irons were there – all quoted names in the 1000 Club, whose members regularly dish out a thousand here, a thousand there to keep Labour's Millbank Tower offices running on their speedy diet of pizzas and pagers, Cokes and faxes.

This particular evening was unusual because, on Blair's behalf, Mandelson was calling for an exceptionally heavy hit. Each of the invited guests would be asked to stump up £25,000 for Labour's election war-chest.

Mandelson almost blew it. "It ought to have been the simplest pitch imaginable," said one of the men who attended. "All he needed to do was to produce a graphic showing that the Conservatives had £50m or more to spend and Labour had less than £5m. Then you turn to these people and say 'If you seriously want Labour to be in government, we need to see the colour of your money. Here's a pen.'"

Instead, Mandelson staged a lengthy performance which listeners recall as being largely in praise of his own brilliance as Labour's director of communications. The clever and successful men in his audience grew restive. One of them told *The Independent* "Five minutes of how clever he was might have carried along our goodwill. Ten seemed boastful. Forty minutes was just infuriating."

Somebody sitting near to a fuming Melvyn Bragg said: "He looked like a volcano about to blow." One of the millionaires, a successful administrator, was irked when Mandelson dismissed his disquiet about Labour's NHS funding plans. "He doesn't know what he's talking about," the administrator hissed despairingly to a neighbour.

Then a little moment of drama occurred. While he was speaking, Mandelson's pager beeped. He paused, looked at the message and then extended his arm with the pager in his hand. An aide – Benjamin Wegg-Prosser from Mandelson's own political office – scurried from the wings to take the machine from his master's hand. Mandelson did not look at the young man but continued with his address to the mighty.

"It was a perfect moment: New Labour meets the old Raj," recalls one of the guests. "It also tells you so much about the pretence of efficiency and the mania for presentation in the Mandelson manner, which masks a profoundly inefficient and counter-productive egocentricity.

"At that moment, there could not have been any message arriving on Peter Mandelson's pager more important than the business he was conducting, unless the message was that Tony Blair had been shot, in which case every pager in the room would have gone off simultaneously. So why did Mandelson have his pager switched on at all? If his messages were going to be taken by Benjamin Wegg-Prosser, why didn't he give his pager to Benjamin before he started speaking? Does he imagine that any of those men would be impressed by this performance?"

Did any of those millionaires who were irked, irritable and unimpressed stump up their £25,000s? To a man, they did. The result was a foregone conclusion. Mandelson took both the money and the opportunity to swank. The evening was a perfect success for him; and would have been reported as such to Tony Blair.

The election is likely to go the same way. Though they may be unimpressed, unenthusiastic, uncommitted – though millions may remain undecided – the electorate as a whole will probably stump up the foregone conclusion of a Labour victory. This will be seen and taken as a perfect success for Mandelson and will be received in those terms by Tony Blair.

Why does Blair trust Mandelson? Neil Kinnock was never completely convinced and is now wry and dry about his former head of communications. Gordon Brown would not now give Peter Mandelson the steam off his breath. Until John Smith died, Mandelson had judiciously kept an equal balance in his intimacies with Brown and Blair, trusted as counsellor by both. In the leadership contest, Mandelson became "Bobby" to Blair and ditched Brown. He will never be forgiven.

"One of the most serious criticisms to be made against Tony Blair," says a hugely prominent Labour supporter, "is that he trusts Peter Mandelson. It's a real blind spot.

"He simply doesn't see that Peter is a master of flattery and a perfect courtier. Leaders create courts, whether or not they intend to. Flattery is one of the leading arts of the court, an art we may have lost or not appreciate. Peter knows its power and he has got his man."

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For once, they missed a beat

Allen Ginsberg foresaw his own funeral, and it came true, says Alissa Quart

"He gave great head," intoned Lee Renaldo, a member of the rock band Sonic Youth, as he stood on the stage of St Mark's Church in Manhattan's East Village. The event was no nonchalantly *outré* indie-rock show but Allen Ginsberg's memorial service, held at the church which has been a temple for poets, rock stars and three generations of urban bohemians.

Six days after the 70-year-old poet and elder statesman of youth culture died of liver cancer, Renaldo was reading from "Death & Fame", the last poem Ginsberg wrote. The poem, which appears in this week's issue of *The New Yorker*, is a stunning catalogue of his own funeral where the very crowd that dropped in on his memorial service is summoned: "college boys' grunge bands ... delicate bibliophiles, sex liberation troops ..."

He was an ambassador-at-large for New York's young, uninhibited, cerebral and notorious for more than 40 years and among the 1,100 people in attendance were the requested "half-century of lovers", "gay classical composers" and plenty of "intelligent gawkers".

Two pretty post-adolescents, David Greenberg and Oliver Ray, sang Ginsberg's "Gospel Nobel Truths" with a lack of skill reminiscent of the great man's tone-deaf chants to Yahweh. The art rock star Patti Smith, bearing an uncanny resemblance to a teenage pretty boy herself, sang some Hank Williams and said: "Even the young appreciate a good shit." That was a response to Peter Orlovsky, Ginsberg's long-time lover, who eulogised him by talking at uncomfortable length about his bathroom habits.

AP/SERGE J-F LEVY

Peter Orlovsky (left) with poet Amiri Baraka at a Ginsberg memorial service

The actress Rosanna Arquette sat in the lotus position, swaying. A smellier but no less flexible man also sat in the lotus position and hissed the word "Creeps!" at fellow mourners. Amiri Baraka, the activist/polemicist formerly known as the poet Leroi Jones, quoted Mao.

"There's a lot of ass, a lot of cunt under the world," read the music producer Hal Wilmer, before a Zen-like photo of Ginsberg. The mourners learnt that there was a street named after Ginsberg in New Jersey, that one of his songs had reached number eight in the Australian pop music charts and that as a young man he had wanted to be a saint.

The service seemed a final proof that the most uncloseted man in American had defined Nineties *kinder* and continued to invigorate the current alterna-culture – a culture most famous for the airbrushed and co-opted nature of its subversion. Young bohos returned Ginsberg's favour: cheering, airing their sexy emotions musically, and applauding laughing references to J Edgar Hoover and Ginsberg that they probably didn't understand. They placed a bunch of grapes, an empty whiskey bottle and a wool hat in front of the church *in memoriam*.

Larry Fagin, a poet and friend of 40 years, described Ginsberg as one of the first generation of adolescents whose teenage years extended into adulthood. "He was a mother and a father and a protector," said Fagin, who noted Ginsberg also had a penchant for rock stars.

One poet summarised the crowd's sentiment. He said that the first person he thought to tell Allen Ginsberg had died was Allen Ginsberg. For many of the fervent-eyed, shaggy-haired onlookers, Ginsberg was the man who bought cantaloupes at Lower East Side delicatessens, trailed by handsome assistants. As in his famous poem where Walt Whitman appears at the supermarket, spotting Ginsberg at the corner shop brought mundane transcendence to many of the East Village's young. The crowd at St Mark's Church seemed to share the knowledge that they were saying goodbye to the man who with his beat contemporaries pioneered "hipness", a condition that they can mimic, then sell, but can never attain.

هكذا من الأصل

هكذا من الأصل

Never mind the bulldogs – let's talk about real life

Trevor Phillips

That vital issues are not being discussed is bad enough; that we don't care enough to discuss them is the real calamity

The French do it better, of course. They don't just think with more style, but with more depth. Even your average Norman, thought by Parisians to be as unsophisticated and dull as one of his cows, can (and will, given half a chance) give you a learned dissertation on the fate of the inner city. They care more about public affairs, and frankly, they know more.

By comparison, we seem to know little about our own affairs, understand less, and care not at all. If the level of argument normally deployed in TV debates and the popular press is anything to go by, we may be entering the 21st century with the least well-informed electorate in Europe.

The differences are starkly illustrated by the behaviour of the medium least able to cope with complex argument – television.

French TV is highly competitive, and underfunded. In theory, it should be spending every minute attracting audiences with soap operas, American mini-series and quizzes. Yet this week alone, the TV schedules show three major TV programmes in prime time which are nothing but serious talkfests of the kind the French adore.

Sacha discute, the lightest of the three, dealt with the issue of the children of divorced parents for 90 minutes. Sacha took it seriously, wheeling in experts and quizzing the families in detail. That programme went out at 10.40 in the evening – comparable to our own *Newsnight*, but with twice the airtime. And with respect to Paxman and friends, the programme's host is so highly valued that he is reputed to be France's highest-paid TV personality.

There are even more heavyweight public affairs shows scheduled in prime time. *Envoye Special* is an investigative programme that runs between 9pm and 11pm and attracts large audiences. *La Marche du Siècle* is a two-hour discussion which this week focused on unemployment.

If this strikes you as a peculiarly uncommercial piece of scheduling, I should point out that Jean-Marie Cavada, the programme's host, is also the station's director. This is not a man likely to put a ratings loser on at ten to nine and let it run for two hours – every week.

Yes, the French are notoriously gabby, ready to talk the hind legs of a frog. But the point is that the French interest in public affairs is not the preserve of a small elite who read big newspapers.

The French explanation for our boredom with these big issues is that we are a nation of islanders interested only in football and sexual perversion. It may be true that we have become used to the intellectual fast food offered by TV and the tabloids, and are increasingly unable to cope with the political or civic equivalent of a decent meal. If so, then we are in danger of ending up with Kentucky Fried Chicken running our affairs. And the result will be that we will have no answer to some of the most important issues facing our people.

First, there has been no discussion, either before or during the election campaign, of the scientific or technological issues that rule our lives. Virtually every great shift in our human history has been attributable to a scientific discovery and its application by engineers. The printing press, the steam engine, the semiconductor, DNA, nuclear power – every one of these has changed the human race permanently and irrevocably. Yet we hear little of these issues or their 1990s equivalents.

Today, for example, there is no debate on genetic engineering, which will probably transform our diets and eating habits in the next decade, and will be infinitely more important than any passing concern about say, BSE or fish stocks.

The single most revolutionary piece of science is receiving no attention at all. It is responsible for the volatility of financial markets, for the shift of millions of jobs from Europe to the Pacific rim, for our relative uncompetitiveness in any industry that demands high levels of education from its workers; it is what makes a single European currency a virtual inevitability. The instantaneous digital transmission of information has put fiscal policy in the hands of multinational corporations.

The odd pop at Rupert Murdoch, or a promise to put computers in classrooms and to make the Internet available hardly matches up to the scale of the challenge. But surely we should be invited by our next government how to say we feel about these issues?

Secondly, we live longer, break up more often. Where will the 4.4 million extra homes needed in the UK come from? Will we build more on green-belt land? Or will we clog up our inner cities further with homes and offices? What will we do to prevent another spiral of rising house prices caused by the shortage of homes?

And third, the beast that has been lurking under every discussion of transport and the environment – what shall we do about the car? We love our own cars; but we'd like everybody else's off the road. A new government will have to confront these questions with dramatic measures. Yet beyond a few bland promises to review this, or to tax that, we hear little from the main parties, and certainly don't see a debate of the seriousness the crisis warrants.

Our ability to debate these issues is said by some to be hampered by the work of the spin doctors. I doubt it. Peter Mandelson, the archetypal spin doctor, is a man who studied politics, philosophy and economics, went off to teach in Tanzania, campaigned against youth unemployment, and sat on Lambeth council in its darkest days. Prince of Darkness may be a good gag, but it's significant that when he went to work in TV, Mandelson chose the most eggheaded, ascetic and demanding of programmes – Brian Walden's *Weekend World*. Not much sign of an instinctive bowdleriser there.

If we need to point the finger, perhaps it should be directed at the political class's fear that the public either does not want to or cannot understand these great issues.

In particular, we seem to believe that anything involving scientific or mathematical explanation will just make the voter's head hurt. If that is true, it is a calamity. In the modern world, where technology and science rule our lives, how can we make a serious choice if we cannot understand the issues involved, or choose not to? And if we the voters fail to make those choices positively, how can any government claim to have a mandate on the things that matter?

A royal bungalow in the Tesco style

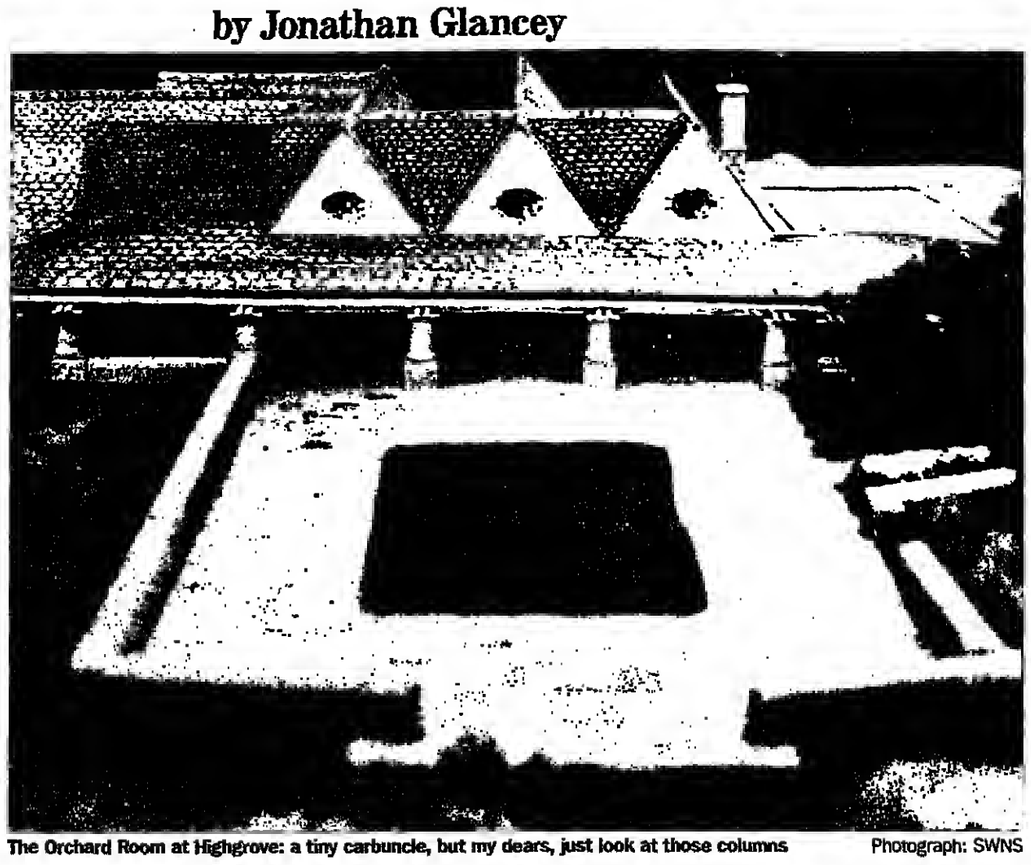
by Jonathan Glancey

The Royal Family is not known for its taste in architecture. When, in 1956, James Pope-Hennessey, the impossibly grand curator and art historian, went to see Sandringham, the family's grandiose holiday cottage in north Norfolk, he found the Saxe-Cohurg-Gothas' lumbering, late-Victorian pile "tremendously vulgar and emphatically, almost defiantly, hideous and gloomy". As the "Pope", a famous snob but an aesthete of impeccable taste, was writing the official biography of Queen Mary at the time, he was doubtless holding back from expressing his true opinion of Sandringham. "To sum up," he wrote judiciously, "this is a hideous house, with a horrible atmosphere in parts and in others no atmosphere at all."

Nine years earlier, Harold Nicholson had been commissioned to write the official biography of George V. He visited York Cottage, the late king's favourite home, an 1860s "cottage" in the grounds of Sandringham, complete with pseudo-Gothic and Joke Oak additions commissioned by George V himself. Nicholson, another man of learning and taste, took a good look round and, drawing on his by no means inconsiderable literary powers, described this representation of royal taste in brick and stone as a "horrid little house".

It should come as no surprise, then, to find that the Prince of Wales's latest venture into the realm of architecture, in his grounds at Highgrove, has met with less than flattering criticism. The Prince purports to stand for fine and noble principles in architectural design, and lambasts modern architects, but when he himself embraces the Mistress Art, things just don't seem to work out. The "Orchard Room", a vaguely Classical bungalow designed by Charles Morris, a Norfolk surveyor whom the Prince met at Sandringham, has been described this week as being "like a Wimpey house" in "the Tesco style". Its gabled roof is "oversized", "its squat little columns are toy-like", its chimney is "feeble". And these are not the comments of zealously Modern architects, but those of the polo-necked jumper and designer-suit tendency: among others, they are culled from *The Daily Telegraph*, no stranger to the royal embrace.

Are people being cruel? Surely the Prince must be allowed to build in the style he feels most comfortable with in his own backyard. The style he has chosen – a sort of, you know, vernacular Georgian thingy – is entirely in keeping with his own beliefs on architecture, and as appropriate for Highgrove as York Cottage was for Sandringham or his brother's Kentucky Fried Georgian excrescence in Windsor Park.



The Orchard Room at Highgrove: a tiny carbuncle, but my dears, just look at those columns Photograph: SWNS

The Prince of Wales lambasts modern architects, but when he himself embraces the Mistress Art, things just don't seem to work out

The Prince views the new "Orchard Room" as "a country building with elegance", which is, it must be said, the sort of line one has come to expect from house-builders who, collectively, are undermining the quality of what remains of our countryside with their "vernacular-style" Neo-Georgian and Tudorbethan homes.

The Duchy of Cornwall, the Prince's own West Country fiefdom, toes the house-builders' line. Apart from Poundbury, that Toy Town development on the fringe of Dorchester in Dorset, the Duchy is busy erecting no fewer than *three hundred* potty "vernacular" houses on the edge of Shepton Mallet, Somerset, and 31 new homes in the guise of "barns", "gate-houses" and "Georgian-style cottages" on the Cornish coast at Pentire.

Sir John Betjeman, whose favourite spot this was, will be turning in his grave. Making barns into houses and architects' studios is bad enough (why not convert them into barns?), but to build twee new homes in the guise of old barns that have been converted into homes borders on the perverse, if not the pathological. As architects are unnecessary to design such rural fa-las, so the Prince has done without the services of an architect at Highgrove. There is no reason why an architect has to be employed on the design of what is only a small estate office for princely business and charitable events.

In any case, the pedigree of Charles Morris is beyond reproach. He is the great-great-grandson of Sir John Kelk, who built (but did not design) the Albert Hall on Kensington Gore, and thus a Good Thing. The genes of Sir John have clearly passed through to young master Morris, as you can see from the picture above.

The important thing, here, is to keep a sense of proportion, even though the Prince and Mr Morris have failed to do just that (my dears, just look at those columns). The "Orchard Room" is just the tiniest of carbuncles and few people will ever get to see it. It is entirely fit for its purpose and reflects the taste and ambitions of those who commissioned and built it. Most of all, it follows royal precedent. Poor "Bertie" – Edward VII to you and me – was so upset, when Prince of Wales, by the handsome Georgian house (frightfully middle-class) that stood where Sandringham stands today, that he had it demolished and brought in A J Humbert as architect and Goggs Bros of Swaffham (builders) to fashion the grim Victorian pile that James Pope-Hennessey was unable to find a kind word for.

The house was made to look even more like a railway hotel than it did when first built by additions made by Colonel R W Edis, architect of the Great Eastern Railway's headquarters at Liverpool Street. Some years ago, Prince Philip wanted to demolish much of Sandringham to build anew, but was stopped in his tracks by the Queen Mother, who thought the family should respect its own history.

You can't say fairer than that. The Prince must be allowed to build "Wimpey"/"Tesco"/"Toy Town" bungalows in the grounds of his own home. It is, in any case, what many smart people in the area do when not converting barns (thus denying them to more deserving owls, bats and interesting rodents) or erecting garages (sorry, "carriage houses") in the guise of barns.

Even so, for all our sakes, for those of our children and the future of what we call "the countryside", such buildings must be held in check safely behind the high walls of Highgrove and other royal estates, or in the grounds of those who still wish to court favour with the Royal Family.

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jo brand's week

The *Daily Mail* nailed its misogynist colours to the mast once again this week with its sensitive and caring treatment of Mo Mowlem. In its usual nasty little Home Counties way, it laid into Ms Mowlem because of a weight gain and doubtless because it was another opportunity to have a go at a Labour woman, one of a species, who, in *Daily Mail* land, inhabits dungarees, has girlfriends, and looks like a plumber's mate. The particularly lovely thing about the *Mail* is that the misogyny does not issue forth from the pens solely of male writers, vitriol spews forth in equal measure from its female journalists as well. And as for Linda Lee-Potter, throwing abuse around about looks, given she looks as if she's had a narrow escape from running in the Grand National because of a bomb scare, the woman has the most incredible cheek, or no mirrors in the house. Of course Ms Mowlem's weight gain was as a result of being prescribed certain drugs, following the discovery of a brain tumour. Despite everyone then feeling immense sympathy for her because of her illness, the fact is that the *Daily Mail* shouldn't even be indulging in this sort of trivial and vicious abuse in the first place, whether the woman has a brain tumour or not. As a sufferer of Not-Looking-Like-A-Supermodel syndrome, I have received plenty of this kind of hypocritical judgement myself and maybe it's time the *Daily Mail* turned the critical spotlight on the majority of its female readers – the unlubricated, bitter, blue-rinse brigade from the Home Counties. Not many lookers there, I suspect. Of course this is unimportant, but we should bear in mind the more important issue, which is that the milk of human kindness leaked away from these dried-up old baggages a very long time ago and that really is grounds for an attack.

I wonder how it would feel to be a black member of staff at the BBC, knowing that the corporation was involved in producing and showing a party political broadcast on behalf of the BNP. Pretty similar, perhaps, to being asked as a woman to make a party political broadcast on behalf of a party that wanted to legalise rape. It seems so ridiculous, in an age where we have laws to prevent certain moronic individuals inciting racial hatred, that it's perfectly OK to broadcast such opinions on the screens of millions of viewers. The BBC is protesting that its hands are tied because of election rules, but it withdrew a broadcast by the National Front in 1983, so a precedent has been set. If the corporation shows this particular nasty rant, they will be letting down their staff and setting back the cause of so many people who have attempted, for many years, to combat the bigotry that infects a handful of very small minds in this country.

"It's all gone pear-shaped" has entered the language as a way of describing how things have gone disastrously wrong. However, it certainly has not gone pear-shaped for the pear-shaped, as this week the usual gaggle of medical experts produced a report on the subject. Apparently, if you store fat in your big end, as opposed to round the tummy, it is much healthier. So at least that's some consolation for women who have to buy trousers that are two sizes bigger than tops. The report fails to describe the consequence of having a big bottom and a big tummy. Oh well, I'm sure it's not good news.

One of my biggest regrets in life is that, as a 17 year old working in a residential home for adults with learning difficulties, I let my suspicions about a member of staff be ignored by the head of the home. Having noticed that a charge nurse appeared to be behaving inappropriately with female residents, I complained to the head of the home, who pointed out that the charge nurse in question had been in the job for years and I had been there a few months and it would therefore be best if I left. I did. But now, when I read news items like the ones this week about a couple who ran a private home and are charged with running a cruel and abusive regime, I wish I had stuck to my guns and taken the matter further. We now know that it tends to be those staff who have become as institutionalised as their charges who commit these terrible acts. As a failed whistleblower, I just hope that there are people out there who are less naïve and more sure of themselves than I was.

Bureaucracy is a terrible curse. I was attempting to find out this week whether I was eligible to vote in a particular area of London or not. Having telephoned the local election registrar, I was informed that no questions could be answered on the phone and I had to write. I did. About four days later, I received a form offering me a postal or proxy vote, neither of which I wanted. Still, rather than wasting more time writing back, I requested a proxy vote. This elicited an incredulous phone call asking me to call. I did. I explained myself and was advised about my eligibility and the location of the polling station, which was what I wanted to know in the first place. Good job I didn't have a really complicated question.

FINANCIAL JOURNAL OF THE YEAR

business & city

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High Court stalls £1bn Co-op bid

Nigel Cope
City Correspondent

An audacious £1.2bn break-up bid for the whole of the Co-operative Wholesale Society was thwarted by legal action yesterday when the CWS obtained a High Court order preventing Andrew Regan and his Lanica Trust vehicle from using confidential information.

The move came as Mr Regan was on the point of launching his ambitious attack through Galileo, an offshoot of Lanica. In a statement issued just before 6pm Galileo confirmed that it had intended to announce "today" formal proposals for the conversion of the CWS to a limited company so that Galileo could then make an offer to acquire the company.

The bid would have included the Co-operative Bank as well as the food retailing operations, funeral parlours, travel agencies and the chain of opticians. The only business not included in the offer was the Co-operative Insurance Society which would have continued to be owned by its membership.

The statement said Galileo had been preventing from going ahead with its offer by the court injunction. It added: "Galileo regrets that the members of the CWS, both individual and corporate, have, for the time being, been denied the opportunity to consider its proposals which it is confident would benfit members, employees, customers and the co-operative movement as a whole." However, if Galileo can make its bid wihtout the use of confindential infomations it could still proceed.

It is understood that the 31 year-old Mr Regan had lined up buyers for all the CWS businesses. The Allied Irish Bank was in line to buy the Co-op Bank from Galileo, if the bid had been successful.

The court order was granted against Mr Regan, his right hand man David Lyons, Lanica Trust and Galileo, the arms length company being used to mount the bid. Also cited was Allan Green who was suspended on Thursday by the CWS as controller of its retailing operations following suspicions of "recent serious breaches of trust."

The order was granted by Justice Gavin Lightman and prohibits the three men from using any confidential CWS information. They are also required to disclose, under oath, all the information that has been passed to them as well as how the information would have been used. They must do this by 4pm next Tuesday and return all the information to the CWS.

The court injunction and the Galileo statement ends a dramatic week in what has become come one of the most mesmerising "bid" battles of recent years. It came a day after Mr Green and buying manager David Chambers were suspended by the CWS amid suspicions that they were colluding with Mr Regan. This action was the result of a CWS monitoring operation which included photographs of secret meetings and the logging of telephone calls between Mr Regan and Mr Green.

The CWS said it hoped that the injunction and the suspensions would "bring this matter to a close."

Mr Regan and Lanica Trust were making no comment yesterday. It is thought that the company was in talks with its advisers on how best to proceed after this latest setback.

Early yesterday it looked like Mr Regan might be set to take the initiative. By mid-morning there were strong rumours in the stock market that there would be an announcement from Lanica "within the hour." This was thought to be a £1.2bn offer for the whole CWS which would have involved the conversion of the society into a limited company and the distribution of £600 to £2,400 to each of the society's individual members. There are 2 million members of the CWS of which 500,000 are considered "active."

But before Mr Regan had a chance to strike, the Co-op moved first by obtaining the court order.

The CWS declined to comment further on the court order.

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'Independent' wins Financial Journal award

The Independent was yesterday named Financial Journal of the Year by the Wincott Foundation. This is the second time the paper has won the award, the most prestigious in financial journalism. It is the only paper to have been given the prize twice. The judges praised the *Independent*'s business, city and economics coverage for its campaigning style, judgement, visual impact and regular scoops. The chairman of the judging panel: Professor Ian Morison, dean of social sciences and humanities at Loughborough University, said it had been struck by the balance and strength of the *Independent*'s economics coverage, led by the economics editor Diane Coyle and supported by the columnists Hamish McRae and Gavyn Davies. The judges also applauded the paper's "high scoop content", its coverage of important City stories such as the Peter Young affair and its campaigns on issues including the privatised utilities and share buy-backs.

Professor Morison added that the visual impact and balance of the business section re-inforced its reputation as a newspaper that appealed to the professional and lay reader alike.

Jeremy Warner, Business and City editor, receiving the award yesterday from Elizabeth Wincott-Heckett

The Senior Financial Journalist of the Year award went to Anatole Kaletsky of *The Times* and the Young Financial Journalist of the Year Award was shared by William Lewis of the *Financial Times* and Daniel Litvin of *The Economist*. The Broadcast Business Journalist of the Year was Alison Mitchell and the Business Broadcast of the Year award went to *When Rover Met BMW*, produced by BBC Bristol.

Exchange deals severe blow to market-makers

Tom Stevenson
City Editor

The Stock Exchange dealt another blow to the endangered business of market-making yesterday when it published recommendations that, if accepted, will put an end to the delayed publication of stock market bargains. The change, to coincide with the introduction of electronic order-driven trading in October, is designed to make the London market more transparent but some believe it represents another nail in the market makers' coffin.

The change in October to immediate notification of deals, no matter how large or small, will mark an end to the privilege market-makers have enjoyed of keeping quiet about large trades for up to 90 minutes in order that they can lay off the risk of holding shares before the market moves against them.

In an effort to even the playing field between the current quote-driven telephone based system of trading and the planned new system of electronically posted buy and sell orders, that privilege is to be ended.

The decision, which although still officially in the consultation phase is understood to be certain to go ahead, is a significant change from the situation in force as recently as last December when the powerful market making firms were insisting that their protection should be built in to the new system.

Yesterday's move effectively means the market makers have lost out to opponents of their privileges, including the Securities and Investments Board (SIB), the top City regulator, which has argued for greater transparency on the stock market. It represents a notable victory for the Stock Exchange only 15 months after Michael Lawrence, its former chief executive, was effectively ousted by the market-making firms he had crossed.

Others to have been unhappy with market makers privileges include the London International Financial Futures Exchange, LIFFE, which was unable to price some of its derivative products such as equity traded options with certainty because there was no guarantee that the market price was the price at which large recent trades had actually been transacted. Foreign brokers have also been unhappy that they might be dealing at disadvantageous prices compared to better informed local players.

The Stock Exchange has moved to level the playing field to try and ensure that enough market participants used the new system to make it viable. After recent embarrassments it would have been disastrous for the order-driven system not to have been credible.

The proposals include a changed regime for so-called "worked trades" where market makers will continue to be allowed to delay publication of a trade if the purpose of doing so is to improve the price or size of a large deal for a client. The Stock Exchange is expected to put in place systems to monitor these delays to ensure there is no abuse of the loophole.

Discussions with SIB are happening now to determine both the proportion of a worked trade that must be completed before a bargain becomes notifiable and the size of such a deal that will qualify for the exemption. SIB is understood to favour a deal no smaller than 10 times the normal market size, or about a quarter of the average daily volume in a stock. There is still debate about how big a deal must be before publication can be delayed beyond the end of the working day.

New horizons: (from left) Liberty group managing director Ian Thomson, Denis Cassidy, chairman, Andrew Garety, finance director, discussing plans to develop the upmarket retailer's Regent Street flagship store. The proposed £40m development will increase the shop's trading space by around 50 per cent. Photograph: Mykel Nicolaou

Telefonica signs deal with BT

Chris Godsmark
Madrid

Telefonica, Spain's main telephones company, yesterday announced a tie-up with British Telecom and its US partner, MCI, which is a big blow for the international ambitions of AT&T. The Spanish carrier had been the largest member of AT&T's European alliance grouping, called Unisource.

AT&T's chief executive, John Walter, had personally intervened with Juan Villalonga, chairman of Telefonica, to try to prevent the Spanish carrier joining with BT.

Telefonica has a unique prize for BT and MCI, soon to merge to form Concert. It owns controlling stakes in large telephones companies in Argentina, Peru and Chile, giving it the best opportunity to exploit one of the world's fastest-growing markets.

Telefonica has 10 million phone lines in Latin America and almost 900,000 mobile customers. The Spanish carrier has a 25 per cent shareholding in Unisource, alongside PTT of the Netherlands, Telia of Sweden and Swiss Telecom PTT.

Attempts to limit the damage yesterday proved fruitless. As Mr Villalonga was giving a presentation at an official signing ceremony in Madrid with Sir Iain Vallance, BT chairman, his partners in Unisource issued a statement asking Telefonica to leave the alliance.

Earlier Mr Villalonga had played down suggestions that Telefonica would have to quit Unisource immediately. He said talks would start on Monday with partners: "We will jointly analyse the different implications over the next few days."

Unisource said the deal between Telefonica and Concert was incompatible with its existing alliances. Lars Berg, Unisource chairman, said: "It will lead to customer confusion and will slow down the opening of the European communications market."

It was unclear last night whether the dispute would end in legal action. Unisource said legal consequences were being sorted out. Telefonica insisted its Unisource agreement had not been violated.

Confusion also surrounded whether Unisource would replace Telefonica with the Italian state-owned phone network, Stet. Sir Iain appeared to emphatically rule out Stet joining with BT as well. He said: "That would be straining the concept of competition. It would be hard for the European Commission to swallow."

The scope of the BT/Telefonica deal was wider than expected. BT will buy 2 per cent of the Spanish carrier within a year for £280m, while Telefonica will acquire 1 per cent of BT for the same price. In addition, BT and MCI have the option to buy 10 per cent of Telefonica's international business, Tisa, the vehicle through which it owns its stakes in Latin America.

Racal warning on profits shocks City

Michael Harrison

Shares in Racal Electronics slumped 12 per cent yesterday as the group shocked the City by issuing its second profits warning in the space of six months.

The group, led by Sir Ernest Harrison, chairman, cautioned that profits for the year just ended would be around £40m compared with a market expectation of £50m because of second half-losses in its data products division.

Racal said the that the losses would be in the region of £7m compared with expectations that the division would record a modest profit. The losses stem from the delayed launch of a new product aimed at the telecoms market which provides a fast data link between computers.

The profit warning sent Racal shares tumbling from 277p to 243.5p, wiping £95m off the company's stock market value. Last November the shares slumped by 25 per cent after Racal warned of losses in its radio division after the failiure to win three big orders.

David Elsbury, Racal's chief executive, described the profits warning as a "hiccup" and pledged that the division had now passed its transition phase and was starting to deliver.

Of the £7m loss, £5m is due to extra research and development spending while a further £2m is a trading loss caused by delay in bringing the new product – known as fast-frame relay – to the market.

Justinian Clifford Bowes of Crédit Lyonnais said that Racal's target of returning the data products division to profit after a first half loss of £12m had always been "somewhat ambitious". He added that the key challenge still facing the group was its relatively poor level of profitability and expectations that Sir Ernest would have to take further measures to boost shareholder returns in what is his last year with Racal.

But Mr Elsbury said there was no question of any further break up of the group following the sale of the Chubb security division to Williams Holdings. He said that the business was worth well in excess of the City's estimated 350p break-up value.

Star Mining chief in talks to save stake in Russian gold

John Willcock

Rudolph Agnew has been holding urgent talks in Russia in his capacity as chairman of Star Mining, an Australia-based company, to save the business's stake in Russia's biggest ever gold deposit.

Mr Agnew, chairman of Lasmo, separately became chairman of Star Mining on 1 September 1995, when he succeeded the retiring chairman, Neville Wran.

Star Mining owns 34.9 per cent of Sukhoi Log, a gold deposit near lake Baikal in Siberia which has resources of over 30 million troy ounces. Star was hoping to manage the $1bn (£600m) development of Sukhoi Log, but has hit legal problems in Russia.

Local courts ruled this month that the old Soviet co-operative Lenzoloto (Lena Gold), which originally worked Sukhoi Log, was incorrectly privatised in 1992. The Supreme Arbitration Court ruled that employees should have been offered shares in the mine, a normal part of the Russian privatisation process.

The ruling's implications are unclear, but resulted in the suspension of Star's shares in Sydney earlier this month.

"Its a hell of a mess," said one mining analyst in the City yesterday. "This one has been brewing for years. Its a question of whether Western capital can get into Russia and out again or not."

Mercury Asset Management and other London institutions have stakes in Star via their mining funds. Star is receiving help from JCI, a big South African mining group, to co-develop the Sukhoi Log site.

The legal setback also casts a shadow over other privatisations in the former Soviet Union where Western enterprises have bought in. Many such privatisations may now face court challenges by former workers, according to Russian sources.

Mortgage lending slackens on rate fears

Diane Coyle
Economics Editor

The fear of an increase in interest rates after the election slowed mortgage lending by banks and building societies last month and led to a slight dip in consumer confidence. But the high street banks reported the biggest rise in their total lending since 1991.

The hesitation in the housing market would not reduce the pressure for a rise in base rates, analysts said. The latest batch of monetary statistics showed that broad money growth, which has alarmed the Bank of England, was still well above target and accelerating.

New lending by building societies dipped to £995m in March from £1.1bn the previous month. It is at the same level as a year ago. The amount approved in March was slightly down on a year earlier and the number of approvals were the same as in March 1996.

The high street banks also reported a slight dip in mortgage lending from £780m to £755m. But this remained 21 per cent higher than a year earlier and well above the recent monthly average, suggesting the banks gained market share last month.

Adrian Coles, director general of the Building Societies Association, said the housing market recovery remained on track. But, he said: "It is worth noting that the recovery remains moderate and that spring is traditionally a time when the housing market picks up."

Jonathan Loynes, an economist at HSBC Markets, said: "Mortgage demand has slackened in the run-up to the election. People are worried about where mortgage rates are going."

Other bank lending was stronger than expected, although not as high as the monster totals for January and February. Total lending by banks and building societies was £4.5bn in March, down from £7.8bn the previous month.

The picture was complicated by transactions in the gilts repo market. Last month there seems to have been a repo-related repayment of loans to overseas banks.

The British Bankers' Association reported a £5.6bn increase in its lending last month, the highest since its figures began in 1991. Much of the increase was new lending to financial companies, especially securities dealers.

Personal lending remained above £1bn but was down from February's record £1.4bn. Credit card lending was half the previous month's level, at £115m.

Separate figures showed a dip in consumer confidence in April. The monthly survey for the European Commission by GfK showed less optimism about household finances and the general economic situation.

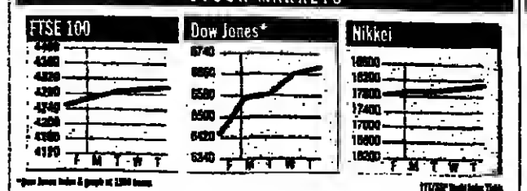
Dealers predict A&L will start at 528p

Stock market dealers were betting yesterday that shares in Alliance & Leicester would start trading as high as 528p when dealings officially begin on Monday, writes Clifford German. That would mean that 250 the 1.1 million members of the former building society, each of whom has been allocated 250 free shares, were looking at a windfall worth £1,300 each.

IG Index, the City bookmakers, raised their spread of prices from the overnight 494p-502p to 520-528p, and still attracted a steady flow of "buy" orders from dealers who would win money only if the price exceeded the top end of the spread.

Shortly before IG Index's dealings closed some sell orders appeared, backing an opening price below 520p and the spread was lowered slightly to 518p-526p. At 518p the individual windfalls would still be worth £1,295 a head. But the real action will be in the stock market and much depends on the outcome of the three stage auction of 157 million shares put up for immediate sale by members who want to sell their shares for whatever they will fetch.

STOCK MARKETS



Indices

Index	Close	Day's change	Change(%)	1996/97 High	1996/97 Low	Yield(%)
FTSE 100	4299.90	+4.30	+0.1	4444.30	4056.60	3.76
FTSE 250	4524.90	+0.30	+0.0	4729.40	4469.40	3.55
FTSE 350	2117.70	+1.70	+0.1	2194.30	2017.90	3.71
FTSE SmallCap	2298.38	+1.67	+0.1	2374.20	2178.29	3.04
FTSE All-Share	2089.10	+1.64	+0.1	2163.94	1989.78	3.66
New York *	6705.56	+25.69	+0.4	7085.16	5032.94	1.94
Tokyo	18093.41	+62.21	+0.3	19446.00	17303.65	0.89†
Hong Kong	12516.23	-65.08	-0.5	13868.24	12055.17	3.36†
Frankfurt	3383.25	+29.80	+0.9	3480.59	2848.77	1.60†

Statistics as of 18 April

INTEREST RATES

Money Market Rates

Index	1 Month	1 Year
UK	6.03	6.94
US	5.69	6.25
Japan	0.53	0.63
Germany	3.16	3.38

Bond Yields *

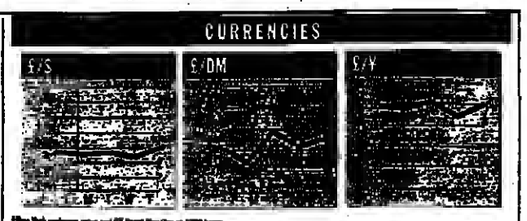
Index	Medium Bond (%)	Year Ago	Long Bond	(%) Year Ago
UK	7.48	8.12	7.57	8.22
US	6.83	6.52	7.05	6.81
Japan	2.18	3.35	-	-
Germany	5.80	6.46	6.59	-

*Benchmark Indices

MAIN PRICE CHANGES

Rises	Price (p)	Change (p)	Change(%)	Falls	Price (p)	Change (p)	% Change
JJB Sports	452	23	5.4	Scotia Hldgs	430	15	3.4
Carlton Comms	528.5	22	4.3	Chiroscience Gp	374	10	2.8
Spirax-Sarco Engr	733	26	3.7	Smith & Nephew	176.3	3.8	2.1

CURRENCIES



Pound

	Yesterday	Change	Year Ago
$ (London)	1.6221	-0.33c	1.5085
$ (N York)‡	1.6245	-0.10c	1.5097
DM (London)	2.8040	-1.43pf	2.2737
¥ (London)	204.060	-Y1.285	163.267
£ Index	99.7	-0.4	83.6

Dollar

	Yesterday	Change	Year Ago
£ (London)	0.6165	+0.13	0.6629
£ (N York)‡	0.6156	+0.04	0.6624
DM (London)	1.7286	-0.53pf	1.5073
¥ (London)	125.800	-Y0.535	108.235
$ Index	106.0	-0.1	96.8

OTHER INDICATORS

	Yesterday	Day's chg	Year Ago
Oil Brent $	17.63	-0.06	19.12
Gold $	343.05	+2.7	291.45
Gold £	210.60	-0.78	259.50

	Index	Latest	Yr Ago	Next Figs
RPI	155.0	2.7	150.9	16 Apr
GDP	109.7	+2.6pc	107.0	25 Apr
Base Rates		– 6.00pc	6.75	–

هكذا من الأصل

Mr Regan's caper doesn't deserve to succeed

JEREMY WARNER

I've never met Andrew Regan, the man who wants to break up the Co-op, but my opinion of him soared on hearing that at the ripe old age of 31, he already has a family of five children. Plainly this is not quite the BMW-driving, bimbo on each arm, 1980s stereotype the Co-operative Wholesale Society would like to imagine. Whether this makes Mr Regan any more of a serious or fit and proper player in this increasingly bizarre and farcical escapade is a different matter.

The Co-operative Wholesale Society has been in gentle, and in some parts not so gentle, decline for so long now that it perhaps fully deserves to be thrown to the wolves. Nonetheless, every time Mr Regan suffers a setback, as he undoubtedly did yesterday, I feel an irresistible urge to punch the air in triumph.

This is not just a case of support for the underdog, if indeed the Co-op can fairly be described as that in this battle of the upstart against a 100-year-old tradition. Rather it is to do with a sense of revulsion for what he is trying to do – plunder assets and reserves built up over generations for his own short-term gain and that of his friends in the City. There is a bad smell about this adventure, right down to the news-managed way in which Lanica's various twists and turns are selectively leaked to the media. There appears no substance or purpose behind it, outside money making, and it doesn't deserve to succeed.

Most people would share this view. The calculation that Mr Regan has made is that though we may think of him as an asset stripper and a Mr Nasty, it doesn't really matter. There appear to be no good public policy reasons for stopping him. Even the Labour Party, with its 16 Co-op-sponsored MPs, would be hard pressed to find one. And if the truth be known, many of the CWS's 300 corporate members would dearly like Mr Regan's money. In some cases it would be enough to refinance their businesses.

The audacity of Mr Regan's plan defies belief. But for the Co-op's legal spanner in the works, he would yesterday morning have been unveiling a £1.2bn fully underwritten bid. Buyers bave been lined up for all the Co-op's various bits and pieces apart from the insurance business, which would have been left with members as a rump interest. Allied Irish Bank would have bought the Co-op Bank, so as to get round any problem the Bank of England might have had with Mr Regan and his merry men, and there were equally impressive partners waiting in the wings for everything else.

For the time being this grand design is stalled. By court order Mr Regan is prevented from making use of any of the confidential information he might have obtained from his various spies in the movement. Since the bid and its delicately balanced financial structure may have drawn on this information, both his lawyers and his bankers have to tread warily. It may well be that they now cannot proceed until the court order is lifted.

If and when that hurdle is surmounted, there are others that lie waiting just round the bend. The Co-op is accusing two of its senior executives of colluding with Mr Regan and giving him confidential information. Secret meetings in car parks, private eyes, logged telephone calls – intrigue on this scale may be more the stuff of thrillers than the real world, but it is also meat and drink to the courts and casts severe doubt on the integrity of this bid. Certainly Mr Regan's lawyers will want to make absolutely certain that no part of the offer, or the various side deals with partners, is based on stolen information.

This is not the only risk to Mr Regan and his supporters. To date Mr Regan has managed to limit his costs very effectively. But these rise exponentially the moment he pulls the trigger. As a result they may already have risen through the £10m mark, which is quite a gamble for such an uncertain outcome. Even if Mr Regan is right, and it is possible to unlock the Co-op's hidden wealth, there would seem to be a very high possibility of a rival proposal, or of the Co-op doing the exercise itself. Mr Regan may have started the ball rolling, but can he really expect to reap the rewards? I find it hard to believe he can.

What do the *Independent*'s business pages stand for? Given that we have just won the Wincott award as financial journal of the year, I might perhaps be excused a little self-indulgence in attempting to answer this question.

In its ten-and-a-half years on the news stands the *Independent* has tried to stick broadly to the same set of guiding principles in its business coverage. Someone once described us as Thatcherite economics but with a social conscience. While we wouldn't accept that description in its entirety, it's a reasonable cariciature. Along the way there have been some errors of judgement, as well as some straying from the path of righteousness. But on the whole the approach has been consistently pro-business, pro-free market (in capital and labour), pro-competition and (here's something Mrs Thatcher wouldn't approve of) pro-European.

By the same token we are naturally anti monopoly in all its guises, and anti abuse of commercial and market power. While supportive of British commercial interests, our outlook is essentially international and we don't like Little Englander tendencies.

We believe that on the whole business, enterprise, commerce and markets should have an unfettered ride, that they should be supported in what they do unless there are very good public policy reasons for restricting them. That is not to say that we are sycophantically in favour of everything that business does. We like to think of ourselves as combative and campaigning, and we certainly don't stand in awe of business and the City, or their leaders. Quite a lot of what businesses and markets do is silly, indefensible and destructive. It is part of our purpose to expose humbug, corruption, abuse and other forms of try on when we see it.

Warts and all, however, we believe in the free market system as a force for good, dynamic change, revitalisation and catharsis in society as well as the best method yet discovered for creating wealth. If all this sounds unnervingly like New Labour, let it not be forgotten that the *Independent* got there long before Tony Blair. Indeed so much of what the *Independent* stands for on economics and business is now so widely accepted, internationally as well as across the domestic political divide, that there is a perverse inclination to believe it may be time to move on and establish an entirely new agenda. Only kidding. The triumph of the businessman's view of the world in so much of public policy is one of the most striking features of late 20th Century history. In our own small way, we have been a part of that process.

Anglian makes provisions on joint venture in Brazil

Michael Harrison and Chris Godsmark

Anglian takes legal action in Brazil

Anglian Water yesterday confirmed it would be making provisions against losses on a joint venture in Brazil less than a month after denying it was experiencing any problems on the project.

In a statement issued to the Stock Exchange, Anglian said it had conducted a full analysis of its international business and overseas strategy and the outcome and any related provisions would be announced along with its preliminary results in May.

A spokesman later confirmed the provision, expected to be in the region of £15m, would cover some of its operations in Brazil, where it is involved in a £30m waste treatment project in the south of the country with a joint venture partner, Cejen.

Last month *The Independent* disclosed that Anglian was taking legal action in Brazil after running into problems on the high-profile joint venture involving its international arm. A company employee based in Brazil has returned to Britain and is on "gardening leave".

According to reports circulating in the industry, Anglian paid up to £12m into the bank account of an individual in Brazil and is now trying to recover the money.

At the time a spokesman said he was not aware the company had lost any money and the company would not be making any provisions because "we haven't lost any cash".

Anglian also denied that its financial director, Chris Mellor, had signed a bank draft made out to the account of an individual in Brazil or that it had hired private investigators to recover any lost money.

Yesterday it said Mr Mellor and Anglian's company secretary did sign off the financing for the deal but the cheque was made out to a company, not an individual. A spokesman saidAnglian had not hired any private detectives but he was unable to say whether any lawyers acting on its behalf had done so.

The Anglian employee who was working in Brazil, Peter Cashen, refused to comment when contacted at his Northamptonshire home last month.

There is no suggestion that Mr Cashen or Cejen were involved in the disappearance of any money.

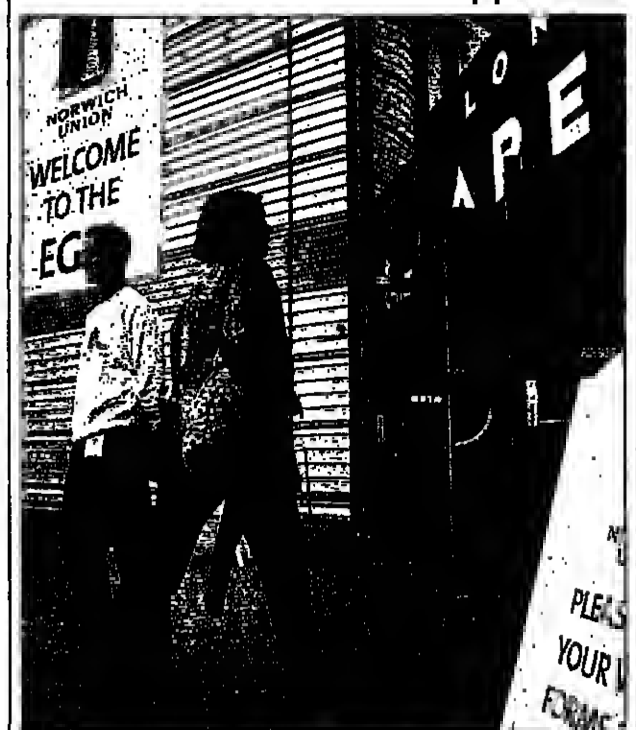
The Cejen partnership was singled out in Anglian's last annual report as an example of its Brazilian ambitions.

However, one senior water industry figure in Brazil said there were rumours that the partnership with Cejen had ended and that the official opening ceremony of the treatment works had been postponed.

It proved impossible to contact Cejen at its offices in the city of Curitiba, in the southern state of Santa Catarina.

The company spokesman denied that the venture itself had become bogged down.

Norwich Union flotation approved



Thumbs up: Policyholders attending an egm at the London Arena, Docklands, yesterday gave overwhelming support to Norwich's proposed flotation. The vote means 1.8 million with-profit policyholders will get free shares worth an average £1,000 Photograph: Jason Bye

IN BRIEF

Car production increases by 13%

UK car production rose a seasonally adjusted 5.4 per cent in the six months ending March compared with the previous six months, and was up 13.4 per cent on the same period a year ago, according to the Office of National Statistics. In March, the seasonally adjusted index for total car production was 132, down from 133 in February. Production allocated for export rose by 3.1 per cent in the six months to March and rose 27.3 per cent on the same period a year ago. Car production for the domestic market rose by 8.3 per cent in the six months to March and was 0.1 per cent higher on the same period a year ago.

EU set to approve AAC's stake in Lonrho

European Union approval for Anglo American Corp to take a stake in Lonrho is set to be announced next Wednesday, after the South African mining giant agreed to scale back the size of its intended shareholding under pressure from Brussels. Commission officials confirmed that Anglo American offered to cut a 28.4 per cent shareholding in response to warnings that such a stake in Lonhro's platinum division would be in breach of the EU's competition rules. Karel Van Miert, competition commissioner, warned he would block a deal which allowed Anglo American and Lonrho to control the price of platinum charged to European manufacturers. Anglo American is reducing its stake to just under 10 per cent, it is believed, although the Commission said it was not in a position to confirm the exact figure. Brussels, which has the power to vet all mergers which affect the EU market, last year blocked a planned merger between the platinum interests of South Africa's Gencor and Lonrho.

Northern Foods buys Scottish Pride UHT

Northern Foods has acquired the Scottish Pride UHT milk business for £8m from KPMG, the receivers. Scottish Pride UHT had sales in the year to 31 March of £30m. Northern Foods intends to retain and develop the processing facilities at Kirkcudbright, which will become part of Northern Dairies' UHT milk operations. The purchase includes all rights to the Scottish Pride brand.

Chemring shares crash on profit warning

The share price of Chemring, the engineering group, crashed from 185p to 122.5p on a warning it would lose close to £2m before exceptional charges of £8m in the six months to March 1996. That compares with with a pre-tax profit of £4.5m in the same period last year. The company expects to return to profit in the second half of the year, but at a lower level than last year, with a considerable reduction in full-year profit before tax and exceptional items likely. Sales in the first half will be about £31m, down from £40.9m. The trading performance of Chemring's UK-based defence businesses continues to be affected by the deferment of defence orders, its specialist clothing division is experiencing trading difficulties, and the company has closed its pyrotechnic and explosives division's firework operation.

Beales Hunter forecasts downturn

Beales Hunter warned that pre-tax profits for the year to 31 May would fall short of market expectations, sending shares in the electrical equipment company down from 149p to 126p. It attributed the lower forecast to intensified pressure on margins resulting from a significant decline in national refrigeration contractors' sales to major food retailers. Despite the downturn, Beales intends to recommend an unchanged final dividend of 7.8p net per share.

Peek Holdings warns of interim losses

Shares in Peek Holdings, the UK data and communications company, dived from 75.5p to 44p after it said it was expecting interim losses of £1.5m, a sharp contrast to the £4m of profits made in the same period last year. The company blamed a slowdown in a deferment of government funding for some of its clients worldwide. It said it was unlikely that much of the first-half shortfall would be recovered by the year end. Its traffic businesses in the Netherlands, US and UK expected flat sales and a significant reduction in gross profit margin for the first six months of 1997. Acquisitions and investment in technology had lifted costs and margins would be hit by slower-than-expected progress on longer-term contracts where profit was realised at a late stage.

Scottish football club Hearts gets full listing

Magnus Grimond

Heart of Midlothian, one of Scotland's oldest football clubs, is to become the first from north of the border to obtain a full stock market listing in a placing which will raise £5.06m.

However, the £14m valuation being put on the club, traditionally supported by Edinburgh's Protestant community, is some way below hopes it would be valued at up to £20m. It comes just a day after investors warmed to news that the Midlands-based Aston Villa would be valued at £126m by its float, in the middle of forecasts.

But analysts said they were not surprised to see the valuation coming down in the wake of the increasing number of football clubs coming to market and the fall in their share prices. Hearts' advisers, stockbroker Williams de Broe, described the 140p-a-share placing price for the new shares, nearly 39 per cent of the enlarged capital, as "realistic".

It will still bring a windfall for the chief executive, Chris Robinson, the Wheatsheaf catering entrepreneur who with Leslie Deans, the chairman, took control of the club in 1994. Their combined stake, acquired for £2m, will be worth £6.4m after the stock market launch, although neither is selling any shares.

The money being raised will be used to finance a £2.97mstand at the club's Tynecastle Park stadium in Edinburgh, the last part of an £8m development. The new accommodation at the Gorgie Road end, traditional home of Hearts fans, will seat 3,450, taking total capacity to 18,300, and incorporate corporate hospitality, conference and banqueting facilities. Mr Robinson said Tynecastle would become the third-best ground in Scotland, after those of Celtic and Rangers, and would incorporate a £238,000 pitch heating system to reduce the number of games cancelled by had weather.

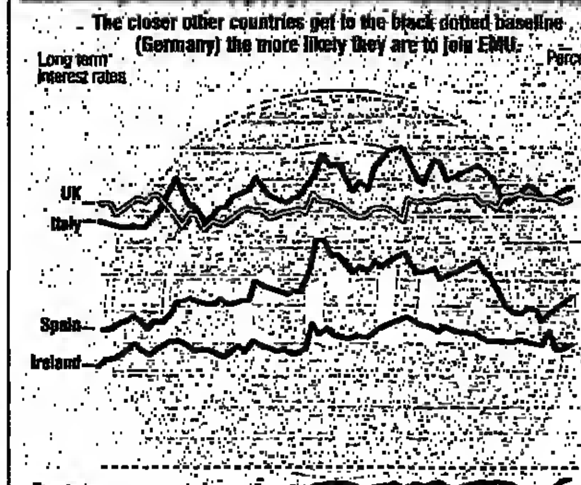
The prize for Hearts is a new television deal to replace theagreement between all the Scottish clubs and BSkyB, the BBC and Scottish Television currently worth £16m over four years.

Woburn in £5.7m deal

Woburn Golf and Country Club, one of the UK's top golf clubs, looks almost guaranteed to host a major European golf tournament next year and will see a third championship level course developed following a £5.75m deal announced yesterday. PGA European Tour Courses, a company backed by the governing body of European golf and Mark McCormack, the sports promoter, is taking a half share in the club in exchange for a payment of £750,000 to a trust controlled by Woburn's developer, the Marquess of Tavistock, and a £5m injection of cash. The course boasts 1,000 members paying less than £1,000 a year. PGA European, which has stakes in seven European courses, said it would become its flagship operation, eventually rivalling Wentworth as the UK's top non-membership controlled club. The shares ended up 0.75 at 7p.

Who will be in EMU? The financial markets' view

The closer other countries get to the black dotted baseline (Germany) the more likely they are to join EMU.



TOWARDS EMU: If the line moves towards the German base line it means investors no longer require such a high premium for holding that country's bonds compared to German ones, because they are confident the currency won't devalue against the Mark. In other words, they think that country will be locked into a single currency with Germany in ten year's time.

AWAY FROM EMU: However, if they think the country won't be in EMU, that it will have higher inflation, and that there is a risk of a future devaluation against the Mark, then they will demand an extra premium for holding that country's bonds, so the line will move away from the base

When will EMU start? The City Analysts' View.

The Independent asked analysts from:
Nikko Europe, Paine Webber, ABN Amro, JP Morgan, Deutsche Morgan Grenfell Salomon Brothers, Goldman Sachs, HSBC James Capel, UBS
what probability they placed on EMU starting on time.

Probability EMU starts on time:	67%	(66% last week)
Probability EMU is delayed:	23%	(24% last week)
Probability EMU never happens:	10%	(10% last week)

Italian setback on EMU

Italy's prospects of joining EMU in the first wave in 1999 appeared dented this week. There were reports of a Franco-German pact to exclude it from monetary union in 1999 and adverse comments from the European Monetary Institute, the forerunner of the European Central Bank, writes Chris Hughes.

Italian newspaper reports said Germany had persuaded France to agree to exclude Italy on the grounds that corrections to its budget were cosmetic. Many Germans fear the euro would be weaker than the Deutschmark if Italy joined in 1999. The reports suggested that Germany had threatened to delay the entire project.

Alison Cottrell of Paine Webber said the Italian electorate was being softened up for the news that Italy would not be taking part in 1999. While Germany is keen to exclude Italy from the first wave, it may not qualify itself. However, according to Michael Lewis of Deutsche Morgan Grenfell, officials were this week talking about calculating Germany's budget on the basis of the former West Germany.

Foreign Exchange Rates

Country	Sterling Spot	1 month	3 months	Dollar Spot	1 month	3 months	D-Mark Spot
US	1.6389	7-5	22-19	1.000	–	–	0.5795
Canada	2.2764	61-56	170-162	1.3976	29-28	82-80	0.8099
Germany	2.8109	70-67	207-196	1.7257	33-31	99-96	1.0000
France	9.4596	232-211	675-647	5.8075	110-104	322-312	3.3654
Italy	2770.9	36-42	71-94	1701.2	26.5-33.5	73.5-83.5	985.803
Japan	205.19	99-95	296-290	125.97	54-53	157-155	72.9986
ECU	1.4330	24-20	72-66	1.1325	11-12	36-38	0.5116
Belgium	57.972	15-13	47-36	35.590	7-5	20-17	20.6244
Denmark	10.709	250-150	710-600	6.5745	99-79	298-247	3.8099
Netherlands	3.1590	65-77	146-232	1.9394	39-37	121-115	1.1239
Ireland	1.0556	5-1	15-9	1.5432	5-4	11-9	0.3755
Norway	11.543	230-210	730-670	7.0569	50-25	119-89	4.1068
Spain	236.97	123-139	01-01	145.49	89-93	170-250	84.3074
Sweden	12.574	223-160	640-530	7.7193	41-16	152-101	4.4733
Switzerland	2.2961	93-64	274-260	1.4110	49-46	145-139	0.8524
Australia*	2.1060	2-4	1-4	1.2929	6-8	14-16	0.7432
Hong Kong	12.693	97-28	134-123	7.7485	2-0	2-7	4.4908
Malaysia	4.0961	0-0	0-0	2.5147	27-30	80-85	1.4572
New Zealand*	2.3625	25-33	74-86	1.4504	22-34	65-67	0.8405
Saudi Arabia	6.1093	0-0	0-0	3.7507	1-4	5-9	2.1735
Singapore	2.3483	0-0	0-0	1.4415	24-19	70-65	0.8353

Other Spot Rates

Country	Sterling	Dollar	Country	Sterling	Dollar
Argentina	1.6390	0.9999	Nigeria	138.612	85.0800
Austria	19.7829	12.1453	Oman	0.6272	0.3850
Brazil	1.7256	1.0590	Pakistan	65.2982	40.0799
China	13.6144	8.2951	Philippines	42.9783	26.3800
Egypt	5.5569	3.4000	Portugal	281.864	173.045
Finland	8.4648	5.1957	Qatar	5.9302	3.6415
Ghana	3110.44	1910.00	Russia	9359.75	5745.00
Greece	442.468	271.580	South Africa	7.2646	4.4590
India	58.3041	35.7960	Taiwan	45.0637	27.6600
Kuwait	0.4954	0.3041	UAE	5.9849	3.6735

Forward rates quoted high to low are at a discount, subtract from spot rate
Rate quoted low to high are at a premium add to spot rate
*Dollar rates quoted as reciprocals
For the latest foreign exchange rates call 0891 123 3033
Calls cost 60p per minute

Interest Rates as at 17/4/97

UK		Germany		US		Japan	
Base	6.00%	Discount	2.50%	Prime	8.75%	Discount	0.50%
France		Lombard	4.50%	Discount	5.00%	Belgium	
Intervention	3.15%	Canada		Fed Funds	5.25%	Discount	2.50%
Italy		Prime	4.75%	Spain		Central	3.00%
Discount	7.5%	Discount	5.00%	10-Day Repo	5.75%	Switzerland	
Netherlands		Denmark		Sweden		Discount	1.00%
Advances	2.70%	Discount	3.25%	Repo (Ave)	4.10%	Lombard	4.125%

Bond Yields as at 17/4/97

HSBC Markets Research

Country	5yr	yield %	10yr	yield %	Country	5yr	yield %	10yr	yield %
UK	7.0%	7.17	7.25%	7.49	Netherlands	8.25%	4.76	5.75%	5.72
US	6.63%	6.73	6.25%	6.84	Spain	8.0%	5.24	8.0%	6.54
Japan	5.50%	1.50	2.90%	2.31	Italy	6.25%	7.02	6.75%	7.56
Australia	10.0%	7.34	6.75%	7.77	Belgium	9.0%	4.57	6.25%	5.94
Germany	8.0%	4.78	6.0%	5.81	Sweden	13.0%	5.83	6.50%	7.11
France	4.75%	4.75	5.50%	5.71	ECU OAT	6.0%	4.81	5.50%	6.20

Yields calculated on local basis †new benchmark

Money Market Rates as at 17/4/97

	O'Night	7 Day	1 Month	3	6 Months	1 Year
Interbank	5 6	5 [illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible] 7
Sterling CDs	-	-	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
Local Authority Deps	[illegible]	[illegible]	6	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
Discount Market Deps	6	6	-	-	-	-
Treasury Bills (Buy)	-	-	6	[illegible]	-	-
Dollar CDs	-	-	5.52	5.67	5.82	6.17
ECU Linked Dep	-	-	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]

Tourist Rates as at 17/4/97

£ Buys		£ Buys		£ Buys	
Australia(Dollars)	2.0400	France(Francs)	9.1400	New Zealand(Dollars)	2.2890
Austria(Schillings)	19.1500	Germany(Marks)	2.7200	Norway(Kroner)	10.9800
Belgium(Francs)	56.1700	Greece(Drachmae)	430.0000	Portugal(Escudos)	270.8000
Canada(Dollars)	2.2110	Hong Kong(Dollars)	12.2300	Spain(Pesetas)	227.2500
Cyprus(Pounds)	0.8085	Ireland(Punts)	1.0225	Sweden(Kronor)	12.2200
Denmark(Kroner)	10.4350	Italy(Lira)	2704.0000	Switzerland(Francs)	2.3150
Holland(Guilders)	3.0475	Japan(Yen)	200.1500	Turkey(Lira)	206360.0000
Finland(Markka)	8.2480	Malta(Lira)	0.6050	United States(Dollars)	1.5880

Liffe Financial Futures as at 17/4/97

Contract		Settlement price	High/Low for day		EstConts traded	Open interest
Long Gilt	(Jun 97)	110-05	110-10	109-29	76367	186094
German Gvt Bd	(Jun 97)	100.93	101.14	100.80	253760	259480
Italian Bond	(Jun 97)	128.37	129.05	128.13	56398	105981
Japan Gvt Bd	(Jun 97)	126.77	126.78	126.60	1486	n/a
3 Mth Sterling	(Jun 97)	93.46	93.48	93.44	21837	117380
	(Sep 97)	93.20	93.25	93.18	27441	95204
3 Mth Euromark	(Jun 97)	96.76	96.78	96.74	30508	228083
	(Sep 97)	96.71	96.72	96.69	26462	185581
3 Mth Eurolira	(Jun 97)	93.21	93.28	93.16	27838	112435
	(Sep 97)	93.50	93.58	93.45	17798	70019
3 Mth Euroyen	(Sep 97)	99.25			0	n/a
3 Mth Euroswiss	(Jun 97)	98.04	98.08	98.00	6475	58608
	(Sep 97)	97.98	98.04	97.96	6618	29685
3 Mth ECU	(Jun 97)	95.83	95.88	95.80	827	7927
	(Sep 97)	95.80	95.85	95.78	1322	4765
FTSE 100	(Jun 97)	4307.0	4334.0	4300.0	9951	60434
FTSE 250	(Jun 97)	4530.0	4535.0	4530.0	70	4841

Liffe FTSE 100 Index Option as at 17/4/97

Settlement price: 4298 — closing offer price

Series	4200	4250	4300	4350	Call/Put Total/vols
Apr	102/1	53/1	12/10	1/53	..
May	144/33	108/46	75/68	45/91	..
Jun	182/65	146/81	116/101	89/125	..
Jul	217/85	180/99	148/119	120/141	110/161

Energy as at 17/4/97

Brent Crude ($/barrel) IPE 5.30pm	*chg	Yr ago	Gas oil ($/tonne) IPE	close	*chg	WTI	6pm	Products † Spot CIF NW Europe	($/tonne)
May	17.83	-0.17	Apr	162.25	-0.50	Jun	18.40	Prem.Unleaded	186/188
Jun	18.02	-0.15	May	163.50	-0.25	Jul	13.45	Naphtha	180/182
Jul	18.16	-0.15	Jun	165.50	+0.00	Aug	18.45	EC Gasoil	167/169
Vol: 29458	Index: 17.95		Vol:	9363		Sep	18.55	Heavy Fuel Oil	78/80

*since 5.30pm previous day. Year ago prices average for week. Source ICIS-London Oil Reports.

Commodity Indices

GSCI Indices

	Base date	+Spot	%chg Day	31 Dec	%chg YTD	Year ago	%chg Yr
Index	1970=100	191.49	+1.22	215.26	-11.04	208.09	-7.97
Agricultural	1970=100	263.24	+1.48	231.23	+13.84	304.05	-13.42
Energy	1983=100	66.12	+1.27	85.86	-22.99	71.84	-7.96
Indust Metals	1977=100	173.25	+0.14	166.79	+3.82	187.67	-6.57
Livestock	1970=100	195.55	+1.31	191.03	+2.36	184.44	+6.02
Precious Metals	1973=100	430.97	+0.20	463.54	-5.73	489.53	-12.00

†Close as of 17 Apr 1997

Industrial Metals as at 17/4/97

London Metal Exchange

$/tonne	Cash	3 mths	Volume	LME Stocks		chg
Aluminium HG	1515.5-16.5	1550.0-50.5	68043	835175	-	1675
Aluminium Alloy	1400-20	1440.0-45	1958	70900	-	280
Copper A	2301.5-3.5	2286.0-87	36312	185775	-	2125
Lead	634.0-5	639.0	7146	107925	+	400
Nickel	7160-70	7275-80	17322	51054	+	1872
Tin	5815-20	5670-75	3359	9925	-	120
Zinc	1229.0-30	1247.0-48	29224	436400	-	1650

Settlement Conversion exchange rates: £/$ 1.6256; $/Dm 1.7273; $/¥ 125.70. Stock volumes & change in tonnes as at Tue 15 April

Precious Metals as at 17/4/97

Spink & Son

per fix /oz	$	£	Coins	$	£		$	£
Platinum	370.50	227.35	Britannia	363	223	Krugrands	340/352	209/216
Palladium	151.50	92.80	Britannia.5 oz	187	115	Sovs	80/89	49/55
Silver spot	477.0	292.0	Britannia.25 oz	91	56	Nobles	370/386	227/237
Gold Bull'n	340.4	208.54	Britannia.10 oz	1	25	Maple Leaf	347/363	213/223

Agricultural as at 17/4/97

CMS

Cocoa LIFFE	£/tonne	Coffee LIFFE	$/tonne	Barley LIFFE	£/tonne	Potatoes LIFFE	£/tonne	Potatoes ATA	Gld/100kg
Mar	1023	Mar	1620	May	90.00	Apr	35.00	Apr	9.00
May	1039	May	1643	Sep	93.75	May	55.00	May	12.50
Jul	1048	Jul	1650	Nov	95.75	Jun	71.00	Jun	15.90
Vol:	7992	Vol:	6178	Vol:	16	Vol:	166	Vol:	636

White Sugar LIFFE	$/tonne	Freight LIFFE	$10/dx pt	Wheat LIFFE	$/tonne	Corn CBOT	Cents/bushel Hi-Lo	Sett
May	307.10	Mar	1335	May	97.05			
Aug	303.20	Apr	1350	Jul	100.15	May	301-296.50	297
Oct	299.40	Vol:	1250	Sep	97.00	Jul	302-295.75	297
Vol	1471	Index	1261	Vol:	867	Sep	289-284.50	285

Other Softs as at 17/4/97

Mar	Maize (No3)**	$/tonne	109.0	Apr	Soya Oil§	FL/100kg	103.00
Mar/Apr	Copra (†)	$/tonne	140.00	Mar/Apr	Coconut Oil (†)	$/tonne	720.0
May	Cotton (NY)	UScent/lb	71.15	unq	Sunflower Oil§	$/tonne	unq
unq	Wool	Acent/kg	unq	Apr	Rapeseed Oil§	FL/100kg	104.00
Apr	Rubber*	Mcent/kg	289.50	Apr/May	Groundnut Oil	$/tonne	955.00

Origin: §Dutch/EC - any origin - †Philippines/Indonesia *Malaysia **N Europe Source: FT Information/Reuters

market report / shares

Data Bank

FTSE 100
4310.5 +11.6

FTSE 250
4517.7 -7.2

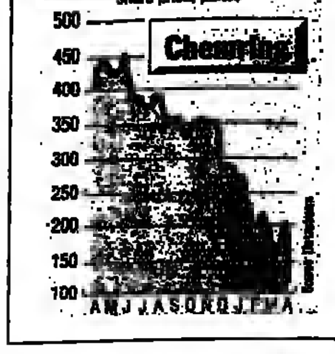
FTSE 350
2121.5 +3.8

SEAQ VOLUME
679.3m shares,
39,567 bargains

Gilts Index
n/a

Share spotlight

share price, pence



Electric profits warnings dull any surge in Footsie

MARKET REPORT

DEREK PAIN

stock market reporter of the year

A quartet of electric profit warnings unsettled shares. Footsie struggled for most of the session, ending with a modest 11.6 points gain to 4,310.5.

The surge of cautionary comments, unusually strong even by the usual Friday level, was hardly the sort of prelude the stock market would seek ahead of Monday's fascinating flotation of the former Alliance & Leicester Building Society.

Racal Electronics was the biggest and most famous to blow a fuse. Its shares plunged 33.5p to 243.5p after it admitted profits in the year ended last month would be "in excess" of £40m. There had been hopes it would hit £70m.

Chemring, once a high-flying electronic group which touched 451p last year, fell 62.5p to 122.5p after warning of a loss, before exceptionals, of "not more than" £2m in the half year ending last month. It expects to make profits in the current six months.

Peek, yet another electronic group, lost 31.5p of its value to 44p after forecasting a six-month loss of around £1.5m. Its shares have fallen from 130p in the past year.

The sparks were also flying at **Beales Hunter**. It said profits would fall short of market estimates which were around £3m. The shares dimmed 23p to 126p.

Away from the faltering electrical sector, banks and brewers inspired Footsie. **Standard Chartered**, still reflecting kind words from reticent investment house Schroders, added a further 27p to 892p. **Bank of Scotland**, figures next week, and **Lloyds TSB** were also pulled higher.

Breweries were helped by comments the sector was oversold. **Scottish & Newcastle** frothed 14.5p higher to 675p.

But cider maker **Matthew Clark** remained subdued following the HSBC James Capel caution. The shares fell 7p to 289p; they have lost 45.5p this week. PDFM, with 23 per cent, is the biggest shareholder.

Tesco shrugged off Nikko's negative comment, ending 6.5p higher at 360.5p.

Drugs had another active session. **Shield Diagnostic** fell 32.5p to 562.5p after rolling out a surprise cash-raising exercise. It pulled in £2.9m by placing shares at 530p with institutions. **Cantab Pharmaceuticals** climbed 32.5p to 1,010p but cautious comments disturbed **PPL Therapeutics**, off 40p at 392.5p.

Zeneca was given yet another takeover whirl. In late trading the shares jumped 48p to 1,834p. Once again it was the Swiss which were rumoured to be about to strike. Roche was said to be finalising plans to launch a hostile offer on Monday.

The market is always on edge about Zeneca; it is convinced that one day the group, with an enviable drugs pipeline, will collect a bid. But even by Zeneca standards the latest speculation lacked conviction.

BT's link with Telefonica lifted the shares 2p to 444.5p and **Northern Ireland Electricity** enjoyed SBC Warburg support, up 11p at 391p.

Rentokil Initial slipped 2.5p to 401.5p as NatWest Securities said sell. It lowered its profit estimates because of sterling's strength and a "sharp slowdown" in the core operations in its second half year.

But the investment house was more kind to the **P&O** property and shipping group. It suggests the shares could be worth up to 715p. They rose just 0.5p to 609.5p.

Societe Generale Strauss Turnbull did not have much better luck with **Tomkins**. It said shares of the buns to guns conglomerate were a buy, forecasting a sharp profits advance to £515m in the year ending this month with £565m likely next year.

Analyst Andy Chambers said: "Whilst some of the bugbears that continue to dog Tomkins are not expected to be resolved in the near term, the company's earnings and cash records warrant a far higher rating than is currently being attached to the stock."

But the price of the last of the conglomerates still proud to be one was unmoved at 266p.

A sudden bout of Friday nerves hit **Sunderland**, one of the Premiership clubs struggling against relegation.

With unquoted West Ham Utd saying the drop could cost it more than £5m the market started to fret over Sunderland's clash with local rivals and fellow strugglers, Middlesbrough; the shares fell 22.5p to 495p. They have, during their brief market life, been as high as 760p.

Turnpyke, the engineer which has attracted the attention of ex-Suter chief David Abell, added 1.25p to 20.25p and **Optometrics**, the optical equipment group, firmed to 26p following the arrival of a consortium led by solicitor Peter Levene.

Taking Stock

❑ **Chesterton International, the estate agent and surveyor, improved 5.5p to 69.5p despite an increased interim loss of £3.3m. Director share buying provided the spur. After the figures were known four directors, including chairman Sir William Wells and new chief executive Michael Holmes, picked up 115,000 shares at 60p. With the property market improving Chesterton's problems should be over. But the shares are still less than half the price achieved last year.**

❑ **Howle, an engineer, held at 31.5p although stockbroker Teather & Greenwood recommends "early purchase of these undervalued shares". It believes profits will be £900,000 this year, rising to £1.2m next. Analyst Adrian Murray says Howle aims to develop into "a substantial engineering concern".**

Share Price Data

Prices are in sterling except where stated. The yield is last year's dividend, grossed up by 20 per cent, as a percentage of the share price. The price/earnings (P/E) ratio is the share price divided by last year's earnings per share, excluding exceptional items.
Other details: xr Ex rights x Ex-dividend xa Ex all u Unlisted Securities Market s Suspended pp Partly Paid pm Nil Paid Shares. ‡ AIM Stock Source: FT Information

The Independent Index

The index allows you to access real-time share prices by phone from London Stock Exchange. Simply dial 0891 123 335, and when prompted dial the 4-digit code printed next to each share. To access the latest financial reports dial 0891 1233 followed by one of the two-digit codes below.

FTSE 100 – Real-time	00	Sterling Rates	04	Privatisation Issues	36
UK Stock Market Report	01	Bullion Report	05	Water Shares	39
UK Company News	02	Wall St Report	20	Electricity Shares	40
Foreign Exchange	03	Tokyo Market	21	High Street Banks	41

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Calls cost 50p per minute at all other times. Call charges include VAT

Alcoholic Beverages
[illegible]

Banks, Merchant
[illegible]

Banks, Retail
[illegible]

Breweries, Pubs & Rest
[illegible]

Building/Construction
[illegible]

Building Materials
[illegible]

Chemicals
[illegible]

Distributors
[illegible]

Diversified Industrials
[illegible]

Electricity
[illegible]

Electronics
[illegible]

Engineering
[illegible]

Engineering Vehicles
[illegible]

Extractive Industries
[illegible]

Food Manufacturers
[illegible]

Gas Distribution
[illegible]

Health Care
[illegible]

Household Goods
[illegible]

Insurance
[illegible]

Internationals
[illegible]

Investment Companies
[illegible]

Investment Trusts
[illegible]

Leisure & Hotels
[illegible]

Life Assurance
[illegible]

Media
[illegible]

Oil Exploration
[illegible]

Oil, Integrated
[illegible]

Other Financial
[illegible]

Pharmaceuticals
[illegible]

Printing & Paper
[illegible]

Property
[illegible]

Retailers, Food
[illegible]

Retailers, General
[illegible]

Support Services
[illegible]

Telecommunications
[illegible]

Textiles & Apparel
[illegible]

Tobaccos
[illegible]

Transport
[illegible]

Water
[illegible]

Government Securities

Index-linked
[illegible]

Undated
[illegible]

Shorts
[illegible]

Mediums
[illegible]

Longs
[illegible]

هكذا من الأصل

هكذا من الأصل

Evans 'in limbo' at Saracens

Rugby Union
CHRIS HEWETT

Blood on the walls at Saracens, rampant neurosis at Leicester and Harlequins, acute anxiety at Wasps. Full-time rugby may have seemed like a barrel of laughs last autumn as scores of newly professionalised players stretched out on the physio's couch and pondered ways of spending their money, but the novelty is fast wearing off now that payback time has arrived with a vengeance.

It is not much fun for the coaches either, especially those charged with securing some sort of return on the multi-million pound investments of their employers. As Mark Evans and Rob Cunningham discovered after Saracens' defeat at Sale on Tuesday – a result that erased any lingering hope the Londoners may have harboured of a lucrative place in next season's Heineken Cup – business is business.

Saracens' decision to give François Pienaar a free hand as player-coach leaves Evans in limbo. He remains director of rugby – "contractually speaking, my position hasn't changed," he said yesterday – but with South Africa's World Cup-winning captain now calling all the shots that matter, the chain of command has been turned on its head. Evans will meet with club officials tomorrow to discuss his revised role.

Cunningham, meanwhile, has relinquished his part-time assistant coaching role at Enfield – a venue Sarries may soon abandon in favour of a groundshare at Watford football club – and is now seeking pastures new. "Until now, my outside business interests have prevented me from committing myself wholly to rugby, but I'm now keen to get involved somewhere on a full-time basis," said the former Bath and Scotland A hooker who coached Bristol to a best-ever top four finish in 1993.

On the face of it, then, Sarries could do without a visit to Leicester today: Welford Road is an awkward enough proposition for a side in the pink, let alone one in the mire. But the Tigers, weakened by injuries to Austin Healey, Joel Stransky, Will Greenwood and Stuart Potter, are still reeling from three defeats in a week and are uncomfortably aware that a place in Europe is by no means a certainty. By contrast, Sarries are at full strength for the first time in more than a month.

Quins, meanwhile, do their Christians in the Colosseum bit at Kingsholm, where Gloucester are proving rather less generous-spirited than the average Roman gladiator. "We'll be at battle stations," admitted Dick Best, the Quins coach. Gloucester drop Mike Peters from the right wing and play Audley Lumsden there instead, while Jason Leonard returns to captain the visitors.

Given the astronomical odds against Orrell, the bottom club, winning at Bath this afternoon, it is most unlikely that Wasps can tie up the Courage league title by beating Sale at Loftus Road tomorrow.

Indeed, Lawrence Dallaglio's side will be hard-pressed to win anyway, thanks to the extraordinary team spirit developed by John Mitchell since his switch from Waikato to Cheshire. If Sale leave Shepherds Bush with the points, Wasps would have to win at Northampton and Harlequins to make sure of the championship.

In Wales, Arwel Thomas was hopeful of returning to Swansea's title-chasing side at Newbridge this afternoon following surgery on the knee ligaments he damaged eight weeks ago. There was good news for the Lions, too, after the latest medical bulletin on Neil Jenkins suggested the Pontypridd captain was close to a full recovery from a broken left arm.

■ Geoff Cooke, the former England and Lions manager, has signed a four-year contract at Bedford to become the club's full-time chief executive from July.

Mark Richardson has to mix working in the family ice cream business and playing rugby for his club, Aspatria, and county, Cumbria — Photograph: Simon Wilkinson

Richardson ready to make ripples at HQ

Simon Turnbull meets Cumbria's captain for today's County Championship final

Mark Richardson clocks on at 6am to start his working day in an ice cream factory in Egremont. Today he clocks on at 3pm at Twickenham – but the 80 minutes of graft ahead of him will be no working shift.

The County Championship final has survived as an anachronism in rugby union's new age. Richardson could not put a price on the pride that will flush through his 6ft 4in, 19st frame when he becomes the first man to lead Cumbria on to Billy Williams' cabbage patch.

In tangible terms, the captain and his team will receive nothing more than a blazer, a tie and a kit-bag for toiling in the studmarks of Martin Johnson, a £200,000-a-year man in the professional era.

"There is no money involved," Richardson said yesterday. "But that has never concerned us. It means an awful lot to play at Twickenham.

"There is still a place in rugby for the county championship. Ourselves and Somerset will enjoy our day."

At 35, Richardson has played two decades of senior rugby to reach the Mecca of English rugby. He has finally made it, ironically, just a month after his first representative honour.

The No 8 known in Cumbria as "Tank" played for the Barbarians at Leicester. Richardson, captain of Aspatria, was a late replacement for François Pienaar, captain of the World Cup winners, South Africa.

"We won as well," Richardson pointed out. "To get to play against Dean Richards and then to play at Twickenham, it's been a good couple of months for me."

Richardson has spent all but three of his rugby-playing years in Cumbria. A debutant in the Egremont first team at 15, he played alongside Fran Cotton and Steve Smith for Sale in the 1980-81 season but tired of the lone, late night drag up the M6 after training.

He spent two years travelling with fellow Cumbrians John Butler and Neil McDowell to play for Gosforth, as the Tyneside club was still known in those BC days (Before Cash, or before Sir John Hall's at least). But Richardson's heart, like his home, has always been in England's top north-west corner. He returned to Egremont – where he works in his family's ice cream business – and joined Aspatria when they graduated to national league level seven years ago.

It might have been different. Richardson could have been among the paid ranks – the openly paid ranks – before Johnson, Pienaar and Richards.

He played rugby league in his youth and had a trial for Barrow, where his brother, David, a member of the Great Britain amateur team, became a professional. "David chose rugby league," Mark said, "and I chose to go the other way."

That way leads the union man in the Richardson family to Twickenham today for part one of Cumbria's weekend invasion of the capital. Carlisle United are at Wembley tomorrow for the final of the Auto Windscreens Shield.

"Hopefully Cumbria will be a ghost county for the next two days," Richardson said. "Carlisle getting to Wembley may affect our support but I would think there will still be at least 20,000 in total at Twickenham."

That would be a vast improvement on the past two finals, neither of which came close to attracting five-figure gates, though the hearts of the RFU would have doubtless been as full as the stands and the coffers had Cumbria's semi-final success against Cornwall at Redruth not scuppered the invasion plans of Trelawney's men.

Having survived the brimstone of Hell Fire Corner, Cumbria must fancy their chances of updating the history books today.

"If you look in the records," Richardson said, "we won the final as, Cumberland, against Kent at Carlisle in 1924. Funnily enough, Somerset's only win was in 1923. So, on most recent form, we should be the winners."

Rolph fails to make impression

Swimming

Susan Rolph finished sixth in a second successive final at the World Short Course Championships in Sweden last night.

The 18-year-old Newcastle swimmer repeated her performance in the 100 metres in the 50m final, clocking 25.41sec, 0.09sec outside her British record. Germany's Sandra Volker followed up her victory over 100m, winning in 24.70.

Richard Maden missed out on a medal by his fingertips as he was beaten into fourth place in the 100m breaststroke but had the consolation of recording a personal best.

The Rochdale swimmer, who qualified for his first major final with the fifth fastest time, was just edged out by the favourite, Jens Kruppa of Germany, who had to settle for bronze.

Maden clocked 1:00.32, reducing his best by 0.08sec, compared to Kruppa's 1:00.18 as Sweden's Patrik Isaksson (59.90) powered home from the outside lane to take a surprise gold medal.

Earlier in the heats Adam Ruckwood broke his own British 200m backstroke record to qualify for the final. The reigning Commonwealth Games champion at the distance sliced 0.37sec off the mark he set in Sheffield last year when winning his heat in 1:55.63.

The 4 x 200m freestyle relay squad of Andrew Clayton, Gavin Meadows, Mark Stevens and James Salter broke the British record by nearly seven seconds with a mark of 7:11.13.

Results, Digest, page 31

TODAY'S NUMBER

37 billion

The projected size of the cumulative television audience for the 64 matches in next summer's World Cup finals in France – more than twice the number who watched last year's Olympics in Atlanta.

Urgency is absent from both sides

Cricket
CRAIG COZIER
reports from Georgetown, Guyana
India 194-2 v West Indies

Heavy overnight and morning rain washed out the second day's play in the fifth and final Test between the West Indies and India here at the Bourda yesterday.

Play was ruled out with the outfield left sodden in some areas by consistent showers. The skies remained grey and the forecast for the rest of the weekend was only for more rain.

India, after winning the toss, crawled to 194 for 2 on the opening day, Thursday. Rahul Dravid, the 24-year-old Karnataka batsman, was unbeaten 71, in the process reaching 1,000 runs in his 14th Test. His captain, Sachin Tendulkar, was 62 not out.

India, who trail 1-0 in the five-match series, were also frustrated by the weather in the fourth Test just over a week ago in Antigua. There, the first three days were abandoned because of rain and the match ended in a two-day stalemate.

The visitors have a history of woe in Guyana. Apart from their inaugural visit in 1953, and in 1971 when both matches were drawn, India have been able to get little action at the venue.

In 1962, they had to bypass Guyana because of politically motivated violence between the two major races in the country, Africans and East Indians. On their fourth Caribbean tour, in 1976, rain fell so heavily in Georgetown that the Test match was rescheduled for Port-of-Spain, Trinidad.

On the two previous Indian tours, in 1983 and 1989, both Tests in Guyana were spoiled by the weather. In 1983, two full days and a session were lost and a dull draw resulted.

Six years later, after the first two days, no further play was possible over the last four, even with the conversion of the rest day. The prospects for the next few days appear bleak.

■ Paul Reiffel said yesterday he is considering retirement after being dropped from the Australian squad for the upcoming Ashes tour of England. The seam bowler said he is reluctant to continue if his only option is to represent his state team, Victoria. Reiffel, 31 today, was left out of the 17-man Australian squad after being plagued by hamstring injuries on recent tours. Reiffel took 19 wickets in three Tests on the 1993 Ashes tour and his style is regarded as ideal for English conditions.

Patient Chapman holds up Lancashire

JON CULLEY
reports from Headingley
Yorkshire 289 and 298
Lancashire 482

After the chaotic scenes in other parts of Leeds yesterday morning, Headingley must have appeared more than usually calm to the players of Lancashire, who left behind the drama unfolding on the doorstep of their city-centre hotel to move within sight of victory in the Roses friendly.

Not that it counts for a great deal. If there is a debate over the first-class status of the university games, the awarding of that distinction to this fixture must also be questioned. The public, so thinly represented here that counting them has not been an exercise too taxing, certainly seemed to have seen it for the gentle warm-up it has become.

With so many of each county's principals absent, the contest was barely more than a second XI meeting in any case. Yorkshire, at least, will field a rather different line-up, including their new Australian signing, Darren Lehmann, when the sides meet again in the Benson & Hedges Cup on Monday week.

This match has been significant for one rare phenomenon: a sighting outside his usual habitat of Yorkshire's reserve wicketkeeper, Colin Chapman.

The 25-year-old from Bradford has been granted so few opportunities since his debut in 1990 that this was only his fifth first-class appearance in eight seasons and his first for five years. Judging by the success of his return to action, one wonders how he has put up with so little senior activity.

But for Chapman, supported by the efforts of Gavin Hamilton, Lancashire might have been packed and away before tea, the spoils of victory, such as they are worth, in the bag.

They had Yorkshire in a seemingly hopeless position. With the dismissal of Bradley Parker to a catch in the covers as a lively Peter Martin claimed his third wicket, his side were 127 for 5, 66 short of making Lancashire bat again. Their prospects took another downward turn at 144 when Alex Wharf sliced Mike Watkinson to deep third man.

But Chapman clearly did not intend to squander his moment. Painstakingly at times, but with the occasional flourish, he compiled a three-hour maiden half-century that gave Yorkshire the unexpected satisfaction of going to tea in front.

Hamilton, whose judgement of a single had always looked shaky, almost inevitably ran himself out – and on 49 to boot when he chanced an impossible run to the bowling of Gary Yates. Chapman, sensibly, would have none of it and both batsmen wound up at the same end.

Even so, the partnership had realised 94 and given Yorkshire a lead at that point of 45. Much to Lancashire's frustration, Chapman continued his innings until he was caught at slip off Martin for 80, leaving the visiting side still with something to do.

Wasim and Waqar to miss Test

ROUND-UP

Pakistan will be forced to cope without Wasim Akram and Waqar Younis, who have taken 538 Test wickets between them, for the first of the two Tests against Sri Lanka in Colombo tomorrow. Wasim is nursing an injured bowling arm, a result of excessive cricket, and Waqar has a fractured toe which has ruled him out of the tour.

It means that Pakistan's new-ball attack will consist of the inexperienced Mohammad Zahid and Shahid Nazir. Wasim's replacement as captain is Rameez Raja.

Pakistan have already called for another fast bowler Mohammad Akram as Waqar's replacement, but have the knowledge that the new fast bowlers were responsible for an innings and 13 runs win over New Zealand last November.

Sri Lanka have included one newcomer, Russell Arnold, in their 15-man squad. Arnold, a left-hand batsmen who also bowls off-spin, beat Aravinda de Silva's record aggregate for a Sri Lankan domestic season in 1995-96. He will play if their opener, Roshan Mahanama, fails to recover from a chipped left toe.

Graeme Hick warmed up to renew his challenge for a Test place with 178 for Worcestershire against Somerset in a 50-over practice match at Taunton yesterday. Hick hit nine sixes, two of which went over extra cover off Andy Caddick, and 19 fours.

Warwickshire are confident that their new captain, Tim Munton, will be fit to lead his side in next Wednesday's Britannic Assurance County Championship opener against Glamorgan at Cardiff, despite a recurrence of his back injury.

Munton, who missed half of the 1995 season because of a chronic back problem, was ruled out of yesterday's friendly against Nottinghamshire. Munton is expected to play in another friendly at Northampton on Monday.

CRICKET SCOREBOARD

Tetley's Shield
First day of four, including tomorrow

England A v The Rest

(EDGBASTON): England A have scored 272 for 2 in their first innings. Today: 11.0.

The Rest won toss

ENGLAND A – First Innings
M A Butcher not out 129
J E R Gallian c Hollioake b Silverwood 108
M P Vaughan b Tudor 10
A McGrath not out 4
Extras (b15, w2, nb8) 25
Total (for 2, 78.2 overs) 272
Fall: 1-237, 2-271.
To bat: *A J Hollioake, M A Ealham, †W K Hegg, P M Such, G Chopra, A J Harris, O W Headley.
Bowling (to date): Silverwood 18-4-63-1; Brown 19-5-55-0; Tudor 15.2-4-39-1; Hollioake 8-1-45-0; Solanki 5-2-18-0; Cosker 14-2-36-0.

THE REST: J S Laney, D L Maddy, C J Adams, *M R Ramprakash, B C Hollioake, †R J Warren, V S Solanki, D A Cosker, A J Tudor S J E Brown, C E W Silverwood.

First-class matches
Third day of four

Yorkshire v Lancashire

HEADINGLEY: Lancashire, with all second-innings wickets standing, are 105 runs behind Yorkshire. Today: 11.0.

Lancashire won toss

YORKSHIRE – First Innings 289 (B Parker 85 no, M J Wood 84; G Yates 4-46).
LANCASHIRE – First Innings 482 (G D Lloyd 225, I D Austin 83).
YORKSHIRE – Second Innings
(Overnight: 34 for 1)
M D Moxon c Fairbrother b Flintoff 10
M J Wood lbw b Martin 01
*D Byas c Haynes b Green 39
R A Pentelbrough lbw b Martin 1
B Parker c Lloyd b Martin 36
†C A Chapman c Fairbrother b Martin 80
A G Wharf c Green b Watkinson 5
G M Hamilton run out 49
G J Batty b Austin 18
R D Stemp b Austin 16
M J Hoggard not out 1
Extras (b2 lb14 w4 nb2) 22
Total (118.3 overs) 298
Fall: 1-32 2-39 3-47 4-79 5-127 6-144 7-238 8-280 9-282.
Bowling: Martin 30-9-53-4; Green 24-8-77-1; Flintoff 10-6-11-1; Austin 25.3-6-85-2; Watkinson 10-3-32-1; Yates 14-4-41-0; Trickett 2-0-3-0.

First day of three

Cambridge Univ v Leicestershire

FENNER'S: Leicestershire have scored 430 for 3 in their first innings. Today: 11.30; tomorrow: 11.0.

Cambridge University won toss

LEICESTERSHIRE – First Innings
V J Wells c House b P S Jones 27
I J Sutcliffe b R O Jones 99
A Habib not out 169
D I Stevens lbw b How 77
J M Dakin not out 89
Extras (b5 lb7 nb8) 20
Total (for 3, 92 overs) 430
Fall: 1-61 2-229 3-278.
To bat: *J J Whitaker, †P A Nixon, D J Millns, J Ormond, M T Brimacombe, G J Parsons.
CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY: E T Smith, J R Ratcliffe, *A Singh, W J House, R O Jones, Q Hughes, M W Dawson, P S Jones, †O R H Churton, J W Freeth, E J How.

Oxford University v Hampshire

THE PARKS: Hampshire, with all first-innings wickets standing, are 235 runs behind Oxford University. Today: 11.30.

Oxford University won toss

OXFORD UNIVERSITY – First Innings
R D Hudson lbw b Connor 9
J E Haynes lbw b Udal 9
C G R Lightfoot lbw b Milburn 44
*M A Wagh b James 15
G W Byng lbw b James 2
J A G Foxon c White b James 8
P G Morgan c Whitaker b Connor 60
C Patel b Milburn 35
†A P Sims not out 11
J M M Avers b Milburn 6
O P Mather not out 5
Extras (b7 lb18 w12 nb4) 41
Total (for 9 dec, 92 overs) 245
Fall: 1-10 2-60 3-63 4-95 5-105 6-107 7-206 8-218 9-233.
Bowling: Connor 15-2-57-2; Milburn 18-8-35-3; Stephenson 10-2-29-0; Mascarenhas 13-3-35-0; Udal 18-12-26-1; James 16-6-36-3; Whitaker 1-1-0-0.

HAMPSHIRE – First Innings
G W White not out 7
*J P Stephenson not out 0
Extras (nb2) 2
Total (for 0, 1.2 overs) 9
To bat: M Keech, K D James, W S Kendall, P R Whitaker, †A N Aymes, S D Udal, A D Mascarenhas, C A Connor, S M Milburn.

Third Test
First day (no play yesterday)

West Indies v India

GEORGETOWN (Guyana): India scored 194 for 2 on Thursday in the first innings of the final Test.

India won toss

INDIA – First Innings
A D Jadeja c Browne b Bishop 8
N S Sidhu c Hooper b Walsh 36
R S Dravid not out 71
*S R Tendulkar not out 62
Extras (b3 lb5 w1 nb8) 17
Total (for 2, 80 overs) 194
Fall: 1-32 2-88.
To bat: M Azharuddin, †N R Mongia, A Kumble, S Joshi, D Ganesh, A Ratnelle, S R V Prasad.
Bowling (to date): Ambrose 18-11-19-0 (nb3); Bishop 15-5-31-1 (nb2); Rose 18.4-4-44-0 (nb1); Walsh 16.2-6-45-1 (nb3); Hooper 5-1-13-0; Chanderpaul 19-8-37-0 (nb1 w1).

WEST INDIES: S L Campbell, S C Williams, S Chanderpaul, S C Lara, C L Hooper, R I C Holder, †C D Browne, I R Bishop, C E L Ambrose, F A Rose, *C A Walsh.
Umpires: B Stern (Eng) and E Nicholls (WI).

Potter sets pace

Hockey
BILL COLWILL

Sarah Potter, the former England cricketer and daughter of the playwright Dennis, opened the scoring in the fifth minute to send Colwall on their way to a 3-2 victory over Tulse Hill in the opening game of the women's Inter-League Play-offs at Milton Keynes yesterday.

With the 16-year-old Isabel Palmer dominant in defence, Colwall always had the edge, sending in Jane Hudson and Jackie Styles in to complete the scoring. Tulse Hill's response came from Sheena Bailey, their captain, and the corner specialist, Alex Stephenson.

The restructured men's County Championship, hockey's oldest domestic competition dating back to the first winners, Lincolnshire, in 1958, gets under way today at eight venues. The competition is split for the first time into A and B Divisions, with the winners of the eight groups playing off at Milton Keynes over the weekend of 3 to 4 May.

Surrey, the defending champions, host one of the A Division groups at Surbiton where their strongest opposition is likely to come from Somerset. Surbiton's surprise advance last weekend to the Hockey Association Cup semi-finals has been a blessing for Surrey, who have now centred their side virtually on the Surbiton squad, with a couple from Richmond.

Paterson's pivotal role

Basketball
RICHARD TAYLOR

Wembley holds no fears for Newcastle Eagles and, if they can continue their winning away sequence against London Towers there tomorrow, they will return for the Budweiser League play-off finals on 3 and 4 May.

The quarter-final series between League runners-up Towers and seventh-placed Eagles hangs on the decisive third game. Eagles lost twice at home in the League, but beat Towers away. Then they lost the opening quarter-final game 91-79 in Newcastle, but defeated Towers 80-70 last week at Wembley.

Scott Paterson proved his importance to the Eagles. He missed most of the first play-off game with an eye injury, but returned to lead their scorers with 23 points, including three, long-range, three-pointers.

"Scott is a pivotal piece on our chessboard," Tom Hancock, the Eagles coach, said. "Some people don't like the idea of 6ft 10in guys stepping out to shoot the three, but I do."

The Towers' coach, Kevin Cadle, just wants to make amends. "I made some mistakes in terms of personnel and defensive moves," he said, "but even so, when you had as many open shots and fast breaks as we did, you have to convert them."

'No curse' says champion

Cycling

Johao Museeuw, the world champion, is out to disprove theories of a jinx wheo he lines up in the Liège-Bastogne-Liège race tomorrow.

Bad luck has blighted the Belgian World Cup holder's three previous Cup races this season, crashing during the Milan-San Remo sprint finish, colliding at a crucial time in the Tour of Flanders, and suffering a five punctures in the Paris-Roubaix.

His mishaps were reminiscent of past misfortunes that have been suffered by world champions who have subsequently worn the rainbow jersey in the classics over thepast decade. "I don't believe in [a curse] ... and even if it was true the jersey would still be worth it," he said.

Museeuw, who has won the World Cup series for the past two years, nevertheless feels it will be difficult to win the Liège-Bastogne-Liège race, a testing 262km (164 miles) ride in hilly southern Belgium.

"On paper this race suits me the least," Museeuw said. The in-form Frenchman, Laurent Jalabert, feels at home on hilly courses, however, and is the hot favourite to complete the Belgian "Ardennes double" after having romped to victory in Wednesday's Flèche Wallonne classic.

A gamble that paid off for Ebdon

Guy Hodgson meets a man in the right frame of mind to end Stephen Hendry's reign as world snooker champion

The one thing you could never say about Peter Ebdon is that he is boring. It takes a certain brassiness to record a single "I Am A Clown" when a number of snooker watchers concur with the title. It is hardly the action of a shrinking violet, either, to thump the air and scream when you win an important match.

Indeed the 26-year-old world No 3 polarises opinions. Some people take one look and reach for the diatribe, others see him as a draw, a foil to the deadpan of Stephen Hendry. Black and White, cocky showman or a breath of fresh air, indifference does not seem to register.

Which, for some, will make the next 17 days of the Embassy World Championship as much a trial of pain or pleasure as it was 12 months ago. Last year Ebdon surprised some by reaching the final, this time it would barely raise an eyebrow. Take away the enduring proviso, Hendry, and he would be the favourite to win the title.

"I'd like to think I'll be world champion," he said, his eyes closing and his face lighting up just in anticipation. "Just to win it once. Just to say I did that. Hopefully it's this year, if not next year."

The journey towards his anticipated year began with being inspired by watching Steve Davis and Jimmy White and taking up the game as a 14-year-old. By the time he was due to take eight O-levels he was hooked, skipping his exams and causing a decp and unhappy chasm with his father, who refused to speak to him for six months.

"It was a crazy decision, looking back on it now," he said. "It's worked out for me but I'd be mortified if my children did it. My father's reaction made it mentally tough but it was his test for me. I look back and I know he was thinking 'if he can get through this, he can get through anything'." The rift has long since been healed.

In retrospect, snooker should have been braced for something different. Pony-tailed and bedecked in eye-wateringly bright waistcoats, Ebdon gatecrashed into the greater consciousness in 1992 by annihilating his hero, Davis, 10-4 in his first match at the Crucible.

"I found the whole thing, the Crucible, Sheffield, inspiring," he said. "I remember the first year, before I played Steve I walked out into the arena when it was empty. It was incredible, I had goose pimples all over. I could just imagine the atmosphere. I don't think I'll ever forget that feeling."

His first ranking title, the Grand Prix, came in 1993 and this year he has claimed two others. He says he is having an inconsistent season, the result in part of the 16-12 defeat he suffered in the world final at the hands of Hendry 12 months ago.

"I was more than very disappointed," he said. "I was so tired by the time I got to the final that I didn't really do myself justice. I'd had three very tough matches against Jimmy White (13-12), Steve Davis (13-10) and Ronnie O'Sullivan (16-14) and mentally I was exhausted.

"I didn't play anywhere oear as well and although, to my opinion, Stephen didn't either, experience is a massive factor, particularly at the Crucible, and that saw him through. If I'd continued where I'd left off against Ronnie, I believe I'd have come through no matter who my opponent was.

"Afterwards I doo't think I started practising early enough in the summer and, although I won the first tournament of the season, the Regal Masters, there was a delayed reaction to the fact that I hadn't put enough work in."

Away from that work, off the table there was the singing – "It charted. Well, it weot in at 157 or 167 if you can call it charting and it declined after that" – but, more lastingly, there is racehorse breeding, something he hopes to devote more time to wheo he retires.

Ebdon has three fillies in training at Eric Alston's yard oear Preston, Ordained and Magic Lake who have already won for him, and Poetry In Motion, whose sire is Ballad Rock. It is the last of the three who excites her owner most.

"She's a very well-bred animal so even if she doesn't race I can take her to any top-class stallion. Her progeny will be worth a lot of money to me because of the strength in depth of her pedigree."

It all points to a man who gambled with his education being equally profligate with his earnings now but, as with many things about Peter Ebdon, the first impression is not oecessarily the right ooe.

"I've been very lucky in that the horses have virtually covered their expenses so far. I used to enjoy having a bet but one of the things that being a horse owner has taught me is that, even when they are fit, fancied and trying, they are animals, not machines. That taught me a good lesson early on. When they run, they haven't a penny of mine on them."

Animals, oot machines. It could be applied to Ebdon himself. His flamboyant reactions to success, he says, are born of excitement and owe nothing to cockiness or disrespect. "It shows how much I care," he said.

At least the spectator knows what his feelings are. There is no façade when he wins a match, just unconfined joy. Soooker, some say, is short of characters. Ebdon embodies the counter-argument.

Peter Ebdon: Charted (just) with "I Am A Clown" Photograph: Alex Livesey/Allsport

Greatness beckons determined Hendry

GUY HODGSON

In Ken Russell's film about Gustav Mahler, the composer is on a train when a hussars' officer asks him: "No great writer of symphonies gets beyond nine. How is your 10th?" Mahler died in 1911, his last whispered word "Mozart" and his 10th Symphony unfinished.

If nine has proved to be the point of mortality for Beethoven, Schubert, Bruckner and Mahler, then six looms in snooker's mythology. Ray Reardon and Steve Davis have won the modern world championship six times and Stephen Hendry is on that number. A seventh, and oumerical verification of his position as the greatest snooker player of all time, has been his ambition and his incentive.

The World Championship begins at the Crucible today, with the 28-year-old Hendry's pursuit of his seventh title the overwhelming theme.

"I'm going to be trying so hard in Sheffield," he said, "that if anyone wants to beat me they're going to have to scrape me off the table."

Hendry, at his best, is untouchable but, if you had to pick a test designed to topple the man who has won the title five times in succession, then the one facing him is it.

He begins today with Andy Hicks, a semi-finalist in 1995, and he is then scheduled to meet Mark Williams, who beat him 9-2 in the final of the British Open two weeks ago. Waiting in the quarter-finals should be the great unpredictable: Ronnie O'Sullivan.

Fatigue as much as form might prove Hendry's weak spot, but he does not mind who he plays. "Being at the Crucible is incentive enough," he said.

However, if Hendry cannot extend himself again, where is the next champion? The 21-year-old O'Sullivan is in with a shout, although his appetite is open to question. He indicated that he would retire during the European Open, but stayed on, explaining: "It wasn't the first time I've said I'll quit and I don't suppose it'll be the last."

Last year, O'Sullivan seemed like a car going too fast towards a tight corner. He was offensively rude to Alain Robidoux and later assaulted a press officer while riding the roller-coaster of his personality into the semi-finals. You need mental rigidity to win at the Crucible, and his is always suspect. How he would react if he did beat Hendry in the last eight is anyone's guess.

The other side of the draw provides more solid threats to the reigning champion. Peter Ebdon, last year's runner-up, has the talent and, he hopes, the endurance to upset Hendry, but also lurking are Steve Davis and John Higgins.

The transformatioo of Davis from the player everyone wanted to see beaten into the ageing favourite carrying the hopes of the romantics is a tribute to what failure can do. The 39-year-old former cbampion confounded everyone by taking the Benson and Hedges Masters in February wheo success seemed improbable. Lightning is unlikely to strike twice, no matter how popular it would be, and Higgins will have to be overcome in the quarter-finals.

Twelve months ago Higgins was everyooe's choice as Hendry's potential nemesis, but his light has faded. The 21-year-old Scot had to change his cue in January and has since won the European Open, although his recent form has left him and his admirers feeling short-changed.

"It's been an OK season for other players," he said, "but after the standard I've reached over the past two years I demand more of myself. I need to get my finger out for the Crucible. Give it my best shot. If I play well, I'll have a hell of a chance."

So will Hendry and, as throughout the 90s, his personality will dominate the tournament. A magnificent seven heckons.

WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP DRAW

1st Round		1st Round
[illegible] v [illegible]		P Ebdon (3) v S Mazrocis
M Williams (16) v T Griffiths		A Robidoux (14) v B Morgan
[illegible] (9) v [illegible]		D Harold (11) v L Walker
R O'Sullivan (8) v M Price	Final	A McManus (6) v S Snaddon
N Bond (5) v S Lee		K Doherty (7) v M Davis
J Wattana (12) v G Dott		S Davis (10) v D McLellan
J White (13) v A Hamilton		T Drago (15) v D Dale
J Parrott (4) v B Jones		J Higgins (2) v G Horne

WEEKEND FIXTURE GUIDE

TODAY

Football

Matches not on pools coupons; 3.0 unless stated

GM VAUXHALL CONFERENCE: Altrincham v Dover; Bath v Welling; Halifax v Hayes; Hednesford v Slough; Morecambe v Kidderminster; Southport v Stevenage; Woking v Gateshead.

ICIS LEAGUE Premier Division: Aylesbury v Enfield; Boreham Wood v Heybridge; Bromley v Oxford City; Carshalton v Dulwich Hamlet; Dagenham & Redbridge v Yeading; Grays v Chertsey; Harrow Borough v Sutton Utd; Hitchin v Hendon; Kingstonian v St Albans; Staines v Bishop's Stortford; Yeovil v Purfleet. **First Division:** Basingstoke v Abingdon Town; Berkhamsted v Aldershot; Canvey Island v Chesham; Croydon v Hampton; Maidenhead v Walton & Hersham; Marlow v Billericay; Molesey v Bognor Regis; Thame v Leyton Pennant; Tooting & Mitcham v Whyteleafe; Wokingham v Uxbridge; Worthing v Barton Rovers. **Second Division:** Banstead v Leatherhead; Barking v Cheshunt; Bedford Town v Egham; Bracknell v Tilbury; Chalfont St Peter v Hungerford; Collier Row & Romford v Witham; Dorking v Leighton; Metropolitan Police v Horsham; Wembley v Ware; Windsor & Eton v Hemel Hempstead; Wivenhoe v Edgware. **Third Division:** Camberley v Northwood; East Thurrock v Kingsbury; Flackwell Heath v [illegible]; Hertford v Clapton; Lewes v Southall; [illegible]; Wealdstone v Epsom & Ewell; [illegible] v Hornchurch.

UNIBOND LEAGUE Premier Division: Barrow v [illegible]; Bishop Auckland v Knowsley; [illegible] v [illegible]; Boston Utd v Bamber Bridge; [illegible] v Emley; Chorley v Colwyn Bay; [illegible] v Guiseley; Leek v Witton; Runcorn v Accrington Stanley; Winsford v Frickley. **First Division:** Alfreton v Lincoln Utd; Bradford Park Avenue v Flixton; Congleton v Radcliffe Borough; Droylsden v Matlock; Farsley Celtic v Ashton Utd; Gretna v Eastwood Town; Leigh v Great Harwood; Netherfield v Curzon Ashton; Warrington v Stocksbridge; Worksop v Workington.

DR MARTENS LEAGUE Premier Division: Ashford v Cheltenham; Burton Albion v Hastings; Chelmsford v Atherstone; Dorchester v Worcester; Gloucester City v Gravesend & Northfleet; Halesowen Town v Sudbury Town; King's Lynn v Crawley; Newport AFC v Gresley Rovers; Nuneaton v Cambridge City; Salisbury v Baldock; Sittingbourne v Merthyr Tydfil. **Midland Division:** Hinckley Town v Sutton Coldfield; Ilkeston v Redditch; Moor Green v Evesham; Paget Rangers v Corby; Racing Warwick v Bedworth; Rothwell v Stafford; Shepshed Dynamo v Raunds; Stourbridge v Solihull; Tamworth v Dudley; VS Rugby v Grantham. **Southern Division:** Bashley v Weston-super-Mare; Buckingham Town v Newport IoW; Clevedon v Fareham; Erith & Belvedere v Weymouth; Fisher Athletic v Cirencester; Forest Green Rovers v Dartford; Margate v Cinderford; Tonbridge v Havant; Trowbridge v Fleet; Witney v St Leonards Stamcroft; Yate v Waterlooville.

WINSTONLEAD KENT LEAGUE: Beckenham v Hythe; Cray Wanderers v Chatham; Crockenhill v Corinthian; Folkestone Invicta v Whitstable; Ramsgate v Slade Green; Sheppey v Thamesmead.

UNIJET SUSSEX COUNTY LEAGUE First Division: Arundel v Oakwood; Hailsham v Portfield; Hassocks v Langney Sports; Horsham YMCA v Shoreham; Pagham v Saltdean; Peacehaven & Telscombe v Wick; Ringmer v Burgess Hill; Southwick v Mile Oak; Three Bridges v Selsey.

UHLSPORT UNITED COUNTIES LEAGUE Premier Division: Boston Town v Eynesbury; Cogenhoe v Mirrlees Blackstone; Ford Sports v Bourne; Holbeach v Wootton; Potton v St Neots; Spalding v Long Buckby (2.30); Stamford v Northampton Spencer; Stewarts & Lloyds Corby.

SCREWFIX DIRECT LEAGUE Premier Division: Bideford v Paulton; Bridgwater v Chippenham; Brislington v Elmore; Chard v Bristol Manor Farm; Mangotsfield v Torrington; Taunton v Calne; Tiverton v Odd Down.

NORTHERN COUNTIES EAST LEAGUE Premier Division: Armthorpe Welfare v Thackley; Arnold v Glasshoughton Welfare; Ashfield v Pickering; Belper v Ossett Albion; Brigg v North Ferriby; Denaby v Maltby; Hallam v Liversedge; Ossett Town v Hatfield Main; Pontefract v Hucknall; Selby v Sheffield.

NORTH WEST COUNTIES LEAGUE First Division: Chadderton v Blackpool Rovers; Holker Old Boys v Glossop; Kidsgrove v Burscough; Maine Road v Bootle; Mossley v Atherton Collieries; Nantwich v Rossendale; Penrith v Trafford; St Helens v Clitheroe; Vauxhall GM v Darwen.

JEWSON WESSEX LEAGUE: Totton v Andover; Aerostructures v BAT Sports; Bournemouth FC v Eastleigh; Brockenhurst v Bemerton Heath; Cowes Sports v Christchurch; Downton v Portsmouth RN; Gosport v Ryde; Petersfield v East Cowes Vics; Romsey v Lymington; Whitchurch v Thatcham.

JEWSON EASTERN LEAGUE Premier Division: Gorleston v Newmarket; Great Yarmouth v Sudbury Wanderers; Hadleigh v Felixstowe; Halstead v Fakenham; Harwich v Wroxham; Lowestoft v Clacton; Stowmarket v March; Sudbury Town v Bury Town; Watton v Warboys; Wisbech v Diss; Woodbridge v Tiptree.

INTERLINK EXPRESS MIDLAND ALLIANCE: Blakenall v Sandwell Borough; Boldmere St Michaels v Hinckley Athletic; Bridgnorth v Stapenhill; Halesowen Harriers v Pershore; Oldbury v Chasetown; Pelsall Villa v Knypersley Victoria; Shifnal v Barwell; Stratford v Rushall. **League Cup semi-finals second leg:** Bloxwich (1) v Rocester (2); Willenhall (2) v West Midlands Police (1).

FEDERATION BREWERY NORTHERN LEAGUE First Division: Bedlington v Whitby; Consett v Crook; Durham v Tow Law; Easington v Guisborough; RTM Newcastle v Whickham; Shildon v Morpeth.

PRESS & JOURNAL HIGHLAND LEAGUE: Brora Rangers v Elgin; Cove Rangers v Peterhead; Forres Mechanics v Keith; Fort William v Clachnacuddin; Fraserburgh v Rothes; Huntly v Buckie Thistle; Wick Academy v Lossiemouth.

LEAGUE OF WALES: Caernarfon v Caersws (2.30); Connah's Quay v Porthmadog; Conwy v Briton Ferry; Holywell v Aberystwyth; Llansantffraid v Rhyl; Newtown v Carmarthen; Ton Pentre v Ebbw Vale (2.30); Welshpool v Cwmbran.

SMIRNOFF IRISH LEAGUE Premier Division: Ards v Cliftonville; Crusaders v Coleraine; Glenavon v Portadown; Linfield v Glentoran. **First Division:** Ballymena v Omagh; Carrick v Ballyclare; Larne v Distillery; Newry v Bangor.

HARP NATIONAL LEAGUE OF IRELAND Premier Division: Derry City v St Patrick's Athletic (7.30).

Rugby Union

3.0 unless stated

CIS COUNTY CHAMPIONSHIP Final: Cumbria v Somerset *(at Twickenham)*. **Under-21 Final:** Dorset & Wilts v Yorkshire (12.30) *(at Twickenham)*.

COURAGE CLUBS' CHAMPIONSHIP National League One: Bath v Orrell; Bristol v London Irish; Gloucester v Harlequins; Leicester v Saracens (2.15); West Hartlepool v Northampton. **National League Two:** Bedford v London Scottish; Blackheath v Waterloo; Coventry v Moseley; Nottingham v Rugby; Richmond v Wakefield; Rotherham v Newcastle. **National League Three:** Clifton v London Welsh; Exeter v Liverpool St Helens; Harrogate v Havant; Lydney v Morley; Reading v Rosslyn Park; Walsall v Redruth; Wharfedale v Otley. **Postponed:** Leeds v Fylde *(now playing Sunday)*. **National League Four North:** Aspatria v Kendal; Hereford v Birmingham/Solihull; Nuneaton v Manchester; Sandal v Preston Grasshoppers; Sheffield v Worcester; Stourbridge v Stoke-on-Trent; Winnington Park v Lichfield. **National League Four South:** Askeans v Newbury; Camberley v High Wycombe; Charlton Park v Plymouth; Cheltenham v Metropolitan Police; North Walsham v Barking; Tabard v Berry Hill; Weston-S-Mare v Henley.

WELSH NATIONAL LEAGUE First Division: Bridgend v Caerphilly (2.30); Cardiff v Dunvant (2.30); Ebbw Vale v Pontypridd (2.30); Neath v Newport (2.30); Newbridge v Swansea (2.30); Treorchy v Llanelli (2.30). **Second Division:** Abertillery v Aberavon (2.30); Bonymaen v Blackwood (2.30); Cross Keys v Ystradgynlais (2.30); Llandovery v Abercynon (2.30); Pontypool v Maesteg (2.30); UWIC (Cardiff Inst) v South Wales Police (2.30).

Hockey

COUNTY CHAMPIONSHIP: Pool One (Crosby, 10.30-6.0): Lancs, Durham, Northants, Middlesex, Essex. **Pool Two** (Telford, 10.30-6.0): Shropshire, Cheshire, Kent, Warwicks, Notts. **Pool Three** (Cannock, 10.30-6.0): Staffs, Sussex, RAF, Berks, Yorks. **Pool Four** (Surbiton, 10.30-6.0): Army, Surrey, Cambs, Somerset, Hants. **Pool Five** (Cleator Moor): Cumbria, Worcs, Channel Islands, Norfolk, Northumberland. **Pool Six** (Melton Mowbray, 10.30-6.0): Leics, Lincs, IoM, Derbys. **Pool Seven** (Portsmouth, 10.30-6.0): RN, Cornwall, Devon, Hereford, Beds. **Pool Eight** (Ipswich, 2.30-5.30): Suffolk, Wilts, Glos, Oxon.

WOMEN'S INTER-LEAGUE PLAY-OFFS (Milton Keynes NHS, 10.0-4.0): Poynton v Tulse Hill; Aldridge v Bury St Edmunds; Colwall v Poynton; Tulse Hill v Bury St Edmunds.

Basketball

NBL Men's First Division play-offs semi-final: Plymouth v Coventry (2.0).

NBL Women's First Division play-offs semi-finals: Sheffield v Rhondda (6.0); Solihull v South Wales (8.0).

Speedway

ELITE LEAGUE: Coventry v Ipswich; Swindon v Poole.

SPEEDWAY STAR CUP: Bradford v Belle Vue; Eastbourne v Peterborough.

PREMIER LEAGUE KNOCK-OUT CUP: Berwick v Stoke (7.0).

Other sports

BADMINTON: Friends Provident Grand Slam (Redbridge).

JUDO: British Open Championships (National Indoor Arena, Birmingham).

MOTOR RACING: British Touring Car Championship (Silverstone).

SNOOKER: Embassy World Championships (Sheffield).

TABLE TENNIS: Commonwealth Championships (Glasgow).

TOMORROW

Football

DR MARTENS LEAGUE Premier Division: Crawley v Nuneaton (3.0). **Southern Division:** St Leonards Stamcroft v Buckingham Town (3.0).

LEAGUE OF WALES: Barry v Cemaes Bay (3.0); Inter Cable-Tel Cardiff v Bangor City (3.0).

HARP NATIONAL LEAGUE OF IRELAND Premier Division: Bohemians v Sligo Rovers (3.15); Bray Wanderers v Finn Harps (3.15); Dundalk v Cork City; Home Farm Everton v Shelbourne (3.15).

WOMEN'S INTERNATIONAL FRIENDLY: Wales v Greece (3.0) *(at Stebonheath Park, Llanelli)*.

Rugby League

STONES SUPER LEAGUE: Castleford v Halifax (3.30); Sheffield v Leeds (6.35); St Helens v Warrington (3.0); Wigan v Oldham (3.0).

FIRST DIVISION: Hull v Huddersfield (3.15); Keighley v Dewsbury (3.0); Swinton v Hull KR (3.0) Widnes v Wakefield (3.0); Workington v Featherstone (3.0).

SECOND DIVISION: Batley v Hunslet (3.15); Carlisle v Rochdale (6.0); Doncaster v Leigh (3.0); Prescot v Bramley (3.0); York v Barrow (3.0).

Rugby Union

3.0 unless stated

COURAGE CLUBS' CHAMPIONSHIP National League One: Wasps v Sale *(at Loftus Road)*. **National League Three:** Leeds v Fylde.

SRU TENNENTS 1556 CUP Quarter-finals: Boroughmuir v Watsonians (2.0); Kirkcaldy v Dundee HSFP (2.0); Peebles v Heriot's FP (2.0); West of Scotland v Melrose (2.0).

SRU TENNENTS 1556 BOWL Quarter-finals: Grangemouth v Ross High; Linlithgow v Biggar; Preston Lodge v Selkirk; Trinity Acads v Hillhead/Jordanhill.

SRU TENNENTS 1556 SHIELD Quarter-finals: Aberdeen GSFP v Glenrothes; Edinburgh Acads v Currie; Glasgow HK v Jed-Forest; St Boswells v Hawick.

Hockey

COUNTY CHAMPIONSHIP: Pool One (Crosby, 9.30-5.0). Pool Two (Telford, 9.30-5.0). Pool Three (Cannock, 9.30-5.0). Pool Four (Surbiton, 9.30-5.0). Pool Five (Cleator Moor, 9.30-5.0). Pool Six (Melton Mowbray, 9.30-12.30); Pool Seven (Portsmouth, 9.30-5.0). Pool Eight (Ipswich, 10.0 -5.0).

WOMEN'S INTER LEAGUE PLAY-OFFS (Milton Keynes NHS, 10.0-2.0): Aldridge v Colwall; Bury St Edmunds v Poynton; Tulse Hill v Aldridge.

Basketball

BUDWEISER LEAGUE Play-off quarter-finals third leg: London v Newcastle (6.30).

NBL Men's First Division play-offs semi-final: Ware v Oxford (5.0).

Speedway

PREMIER LEAGUE KNOCK-OUT CUP: Glasgow v Berwick (6.30); Newcastle v Edinburgh (6.30); Skegness v Long Eaton (6.30).

Other sports

BADMINTON: Friends Provident Grand Slam (Redbridge)

MOTOR RACING: British Touring Car Championship (Silverstone).

SNOOKER: Embassy World Championships (Sheffield).

TABLE TENNIS: Commonwealth Championships (Glasgow).

BANGOR

HYPERION

2.10 Chorokee Chief 2.40 My Nominee 3.10 Indian Jockey 3.45 Prussia 4.15 Kiltulla 4.45 Orange Ragusa 5.15 Mapleton

GOING: Good.

[illegible] undulating course, run-in [illegible]yds.

Course is [illegible] of Wrexham near junction of A525 and B5069. [illegible] from Wrexham station. **ADMISSION:** Paddock £9; [illegible] (under-16s free all enclosures). **CAR PARK:** Free.

BLINKERED FIRST TIME: Persian Elite (2.10)

WINNERS IN THE LAST SEVEN DAYS: Sharp Command [illegible] Southwell on Saturday.

LONG-DISTANCE RUNNERS: Tiger Claw (4.15) sent 225 miles by [illegible] from Horsham, Devon.

2.10 CREWE NOVICE HURDLE (CLASS E) £3,500 added 2m 4f

NORTHERN STAR (18) J Pickering 6 11 6 Miss J Wormall (7)
PERSIAN ELITE (25) C Egerton 6 11 6 J R Kavanagh B
RING OF VISION (19) C Mann 5 11 6 I Railton
SPECIAL BEAT (65) (D) N Henderson 5 11 1 Mr C Vigors (5)
CHEROKEE CHIEF (53) (BF) O Sherwood 5 11 0 J A McCarthy
COOL CAT (52) [illegible] 5 11 0 V Slattery
GOWER-SLAVE (36) P Bowen 5 11 0 W Marston
JEMARO (63) [illegible] 6 11 0 T Jenks
ONE BOY (25) A Hayes 5 11 0 P Holley
ORINOCO VENTURE (218) A Bailey 6 11 0 T Kent
PHARMONY Mrs S Smith 7 11 0 G F Ryan (5)
SOUNDPOST (130) Mrs L Williamson 5 11 0 Mr A Wood
THE CROOKED OAK (86) N Twiston-Davies 5 11 0 D Walsh
THE NAUGHTY VICAR (453) G Richards 7 11 0 Richard Guest
WESTERN SUN [illegible] 7 11 0 A Bates (5)
ASK ME IN (132) T [illegible] 6 10 9 M Foster
DUNSTON KNIGHT B Preece 4 10 7 J Mogford (7)
KHALIKHOUM (35) Sir John Barlow Bt 4 10 7 D J Kavanagh
– 18 declared –

BETTING: 7-4 Cherokee Chief, 7-2 Ring Of Vision, 4-1 Persian Elite, 8-1 Special Beat, 14-1 Northern Star, 16-1 Ask Me In, 20-1 others

2.40 ROBERT JONES OPEN HUNTER CHASE (CLASS H) £2,000 added 2m 4f 110yds

RING OF SHADOWS (18) Mrs C Corden 10 12 7 Mr S Prior (7)
MY NOMINEE (10) (CD) D Nicholls 9 12 7 Mr R Burton (7) B
RATHER SHARP (315) S Watson 11 12 7 Mr B Pollock (5)
CHARLIES DELIGHT (31) Mrs C Hicks 9 12 0 Mr C Vigors (5)
DALAMETRE (14) (BF) M Evans 10 12 0 Mr M Munrowd (7)
GALZIG (19) Mrs D Turner 9 12 0 Mr W Tellwright (7)
NADIAD (502) D McCain 11 12 0 Mr A Wintle (7)
PRESS FOR ACTION (757) S S-Beacon 12 12 0 Mr R Ford (5)
SAAHI (USA) (667) J Swindells 8 12 0 Miss B Swindells (7)
SIMPLY PERFECT (31) J Swanson 11 12 0 Miss K Swindells (7)
THORNHILL (361) F Matthews 7 11 9 Mr A Wood (7)
– 11 declared –

BETTING: 6-4 My Nominee, 6-1 Dalametre, 7-1 Galzig, 8-1 Press For Action, 10-1 Simply Perfect, 12-1 Saahi, 14-1 Nadiad, 16-1 others

3.10 HALLIWELL LANDAU NOVICE CHASE (CLASS D) £6,000 added 2m 1f 110yds

INDIAN JOCKEY (45) (CD) M Pipe 5 11 11 D Walsh
EXEMPLAR (26) (BF) Mrs S Smith 9 11 0 G F Ryan (5)
STEEL GOLD (385) T Forster 7 11 0 Mr R Burton (7)
THE SECRET GREY (30) D McCain 6 11 0 T Jenks
DEE LIGHT (29) G Richards 8 10 9 Richard Guest
EUROLINK SHADOW (26) D McCain 5 10 7 V Slattery
– 6 declared –

BETTING: 4-7 Indian Jockey, 9-2 Exemplar, 6-1 Dee Light, 14-1 The Secret Grey, 16-1 Eurolink Shadow, 33-1 Steel Gold

3.45 SOTHEBY'S HANDICAP HURDLE (CLASS D) £5,000 added 3m

1 30560/ PRIME DISPLAY (1,116) (D) A Harvey 11 11 10 T Jenks
2 415-314 CUTTHROAT KID (19) T Greathead 7 11 4 P Holley
3 330002 PRUSSIA (28) W Clay 6 11 0 Guy Lewis (3)
4 00-3P53 HOODED HAWK (50) N Henderson 6 11 0 J R Kavanagh
5 314FP/ FED ON OATS (1,099) Miss V Williams 9 10 13 I Railton
6 331044 PHARARE (46) (CD) R Woodhouse 7 10 11 D J Kavanagh (5)
7 01-1600 BETTER BYTHE GLASS (51) (D) N T-Davies 8 10 4 D Walsh
8 432312 FIRST CRACK (10) (BF) F Jordan 12 10 3 T Eley
9 1-4PP42 LAYHAM LOW (16) O Sherwood 6 10 3 J A McCarthy
10 U041 SHARP COMMAND (7) P Eccles 4 10 2 Richard Guest
11 460333 TIGER CLAW (21) A Hobbs 11 10 0 Mr G Shenkin (7)
12 10-P006 MILL THYME (37) P Beaumont 5 10 0 M Foster
13 430064 DERRING BRIDGE (19) (D) Mrs S Johnson 7 10 0 W Marston
14 4/5-026 THIS NETTLE DANGER (31) (D) O Brennan 13 10 0 M Brennan
15 3-4060 OLD CAVALIER (70) J J O'Neill 6 10 0 J Callaghan
16 UFP/P-P0 KANO WARRIOR (38) (D) B Preece 10 10 0 J Mogford (7)
– 16 declared –

Minimum: 10st. Weights: Tiger Claw 9st 10lb, Mill Thyme 9st 9lb, Derring Bridge 9st 7lb, This Nettle Danger 9st 6lb, Old Cavalier 9st 5lb, Kano Warrior 9st 3lb.

BETTING: FORECAST: 7-2 Sharp Command, 11-2 Hooded Hawk, 6-1 Prussia, 13-2 First Crack, 8-1 Cutthroat Kid, 10-1 Pharare, 12-1 others

4.15 BROOKES BELL NOVICE H'CAP CHASE (CLASS D) £5,000 added 2m 4f 110yds

1 50P111 QUITE A MAN (18) (D) S Brookshaw 9 12 0 Mr R Burton (7)
2 51F-134 HARVEST VIEW (35) (D) C Brooks 7 11 7 M Berry (7)
3 5642P1 FRONTIER FLIGHT (128) Miss L Siddall 7 10 4 E Husband (3)
4 3PP-0P LIBERTARIAN (71) O Sherwood 7 10 2 J A McCarthy
5 303UP2 CURRAGH PETER (25) Mrs P Bickerton 10 10 0 Guy Lewis (3)
6 333342 KILTULLA (19) Mrs S Smith 7 10 0 G F Ryan (5)
7 332452 WINNOW (17) A Turnell 7 10 0 C Rae
8 005563 ALASKAN HEIR (19) A Streeter 6 10 0 T Eley V
9 503624 HEATHYARDS BOY (10) D McCain 7 10 0 D Walsh B
10 /P00-6F ALTHREY BLUE (66) A Turnell 6 10 0 M Foster
– 10 declared –

Minimum: 10st. Weights: Curragh Peter 9st 10lb, Kiltulla 9st 10lb, Winnow 9st 10lb, Alaskan Heir 9st 3lb, Heathyards Boy 9st 1lb, Althrey Blue 8st 12lb.

BETTING: 9-4 Quite A Man, 5-2 Harvest View, 6-1 Heathyards Boy, 13-2 Kiltulla, 7-1 Winnow, 12-1 Frontier Flight, 14-1 Libertarian, 20-1 others

4.45 JANE McALPINE HUNTER CHASE (CLASS H) £2,000 added 3m 110yds

1 P12P0/ FAR CROSSING (718) Mrs T Hill 11 12 7 Mr M Emmanuel (7)
2 42P-1PF HIGHWAY FIVE (15) (CD) Lucy S Bodie 9 12 7 Miss R James (7)
3 U1P5P2 AVOSTAR (21) (D) Miss C Saunders 10 12 4 Mr B Pollock (5)
4 05/P21U JUPITER MOON (3) Mrs C Hicks 8 12 4 Mr C Vigors (5)
5 .05/0- FIBREGUIDE TECH (665) (D) T Kinsey 14 12 0 Mr R Thomas (7)
6 5/6045/ MR BUSKER (728) P Morris 8 12 0 Mr C J B Barlow (7)
7 22460/- NODFORM WONDER (378) R Bevis 10 12 0 Mr R Bevis (7)
8 P00/3/3 ORANGE RAGUSA (29) S S-Beacon 11 12 0 Mr R Ford (5)
9 PP6U-4P ORTON HOUSE (35) S Kelly 10 12 0 Mr R Burton (7)
– 9 declared –

BETTING: 9-4 Avostar, 11-4 Orange Ragusa, 7-2 Nodform Wonder, 10-1 Fair Crossing, Jupiter Moon, 12-1 Fibreguide Tech, 14-1 others

5.15 EMRAL HANDICAP HURDLE (CLASS F) £4,000 added 2m 1f

1 01-5411 HAMADRYAD (176) Mrs V Ward 9 12 0 J R Kavanagh
2 33-4233 NEWHALL PRINCE (19) A Streeter 9 11 8 T Eley
3 00-6445 INNOCENT GEORGE (52) (D) Miss L Siddall 8 11 3 M Foster
4 006034 NEVER SO BLUE (19) P Bradley 6 11 2 D J Kavanagh (5)
5 540P15 EVEZIO RUFO (10) N Littmoden 5 11 2 D Walsh B
6 362514 SHIFT AGAIN (93) (D) O Sherwood 5 11 1 Sophie Mitchell (3) B
7 P-PFF11 CARACOL (38) (D) J Neville 8 10 8 T Dascombe
8 015051 KIERCHEM (19) C Grant 6 10 7 J Callaghan
9 002030 AIDAR (21) O Brennan 6 10 6 M Brennan
10 000302 THE BREWER (19) J Tuck 5 10 5 W Marston
11 606605 MAPLETON (21) Mrs S Smith 4 10 4 Richard Guest
12 0-F0060 NIAGARA SOUND (47) B Preece 6 10 4 Gary Lyons
13 P404 PRINCIPAL BOY (10) T Etherington 4 10 1 R Rourke
14 000050 OUT OF THE BLUE (32) M Eckley 5 10 0 J Mogford (7) R
– 14 declared –

BETTING: 9-2 Kierchem, 11-2 Newhall Prince, 6-1 Mapleton, 12-2 Caracol, 8-1 Evezio Rufo, Shift Again, 10-1 Hamadryad, 12-1 others

STRATFORD

HYPERION

2.35 Shekels 3.05 Over The Pole 3.35 Schnozzle 4.05 Domaine De Pron 4.35 Tuffnut George 5.05 Siberian Mystic 5.35 Mountain Path

GOING: Good (Good to Firm in places).

Left-hand course with 200yd run-in.

Course is SW of Stratford-on-Avon on A439. Stratford station 1m. **ADMISSION:** Club £12; Tattersalls £8; Course £4. **CAR PARK:** Inside course £2, remainder free.

BLINKERED FIRST TIME: Lord Kilton (4.35).

WINNERS IN THE LAST SEVEN DAYS: Polden Pride (3.05) won at Newton Abbot on Saturday; Daily Sport Girl (5.05) won at Southwell on Monday.

LONG-DISTANCE RUNNERS: Cloudy House (5.35) sent 189 miles by N Lampard from Kingsbridge, Devon.

2.35 JENKINSONS NOVICE HURDLE (CLASS E) (DIV I) £2,000 added 2m 6f 110yds

1 40-341 SHEKELS (35) C Brooks 6 11 4 G Bradley
2 03346/- BECK AND CALL (736) Miss V Williams 8 10 12 G Upton
3 0 FREELINE FONTAINE (56) N Henderson 5 10 12 M A Fitzgerald
4 00 GREEN KING (66) A Jones 5 10 12 D Gardy (7)
5 564 IRISH DELIGHT (119) R Curtis 5 10 12 D Morris
6 0-R0 MILL BAY SAM (42) Mrs M Jones 6 10 12 Derek Byrne
7 OCCOLD G Hubbard 6 10 12 D Gallagher
8 0/-0 SIDNEY (32) J McConnochie 8 10 12 S Wynne
9 PP FINAL ROSE (19) R Smith 7 10 7 Mr J Goldstein (7)
10 0 ISIS DAWN (44) A Newcombe 5 10 7 P Henley (3)
11 MARLIES GOHR T Clement 5 10 7 L Aspell (3)
– 11 declared –

BETTING: 13-8 Shekels, 9-2 Occold, 11-2 Beck And Call, 13-2 Freeline Fontaine, 10-1 Irish Delight, 12-1 Green King, 16-1 others

3.05 LAURENT-PERRIER HANDICAP CHASE (CLASS C) £5,500 added 2m 4f

1 22U002 CALLISOE BAY (18) (C) (BF) O Sherwood 8 11 10 G Bradley
2 4-234PU AROUND THE HORN (40) (D) J Gifford 10 11 8 S McNeill
3 111-S0U BORO VACATION (176) (D) P Nicholls 6 11 5 K Gaule
4 22F120 SUPER COIN (37) R Lee 9 10 11 P Henley (3)
5 13-2221 POLDEN PRIDE (7) G Balding 8 10 6 B Clifford
6 12222F PHILIP'S WOODY (73) (C) (D) N Henderson 9 10 6 M A Fitzgerald
7 F/4-P313 OVER THE POLE (35) P Cheesbrough 10 10 1 D Forth (5)
8 P/3-F223 HIGH ALTITUDE (28) (BF) M Heaton-Ellis 9 10 0 D Gallagher
9 21/12F5 MERRY PANTO (77) (D) (BF) C Brooks 6 10 0 C Rafter (7)
– 9 declared –

BETTING: 7-2 Polden Pride, 4-1 Philip's Woody, 9-2 Callisoe Bay, 13-2 High Altitude, 7-1 Around The Horn, 8-1 Boro Vacation, 10-1 others

3.35 RICHARDSONS NOVICE HANDICAP HURDLE (CLASS E) £2,500 added 2m 110yds

1 31P1P RITTO (36) (BF) J Neville 7 11 13 N Mann
2 F4-0363 SCHNOZZLE (35) K Bridgwater 6 11 7 S Bradley
3 442450 BALLY PARSON (80) R Dickin 11 11 2 D Leahy
4 6661PF MILLING BROOK (15) J M Bradley 5 11 1 D Gallagher
5 5/0602 SNOWSHILL SHAKER (45) N T-Davies 8 11 0 R Bellamy
6 00P640- NAHLA (376) B De Haan 7 11 0 S McNeill
7 4P-0P66 PALLADIUM BOY (45) Mrs J Retter 7 10 13 M A Fitzgerald
8 6-005P1 REVERSE THRUST (19) P Hedger 6 10 12 M Clinton (7)
9 1066U ZESTI (19) T Clement 5 10 9 L Aspell (3)
10 005-P52 KETCHICAN (16) S Knight 5 10 6 S Anderson
11 5003 FENCER'S QUEST (18) T Forster 4 10 6 S Wynne
12 2P43P ANOTHER COMEDY (19) R Lee 7 10 0 P Henley (3)
13 40084 DAYDREAM BELIEVER (17) M Saunders 5 10 0 B Clifford
14 P-0P SERIOUS OPTION (58) R Curtis 8 10 0 D Morris
15 0-0PU4 AQUA AMBER (19) J M Bradley 5 10 0 W McFarland
16 B60556 ALPHA LEATHER (18) L Grassick 6 10 0 Mr J Grassick
17 6/PP541 ANIF (USA) (19) (D) J Joseph 6 10 0 Mr J Goldstein (7)
– 12 declared –

Minimum: True weights: Another Comedy 9st 13lb, Daydream Believer 9st 12lb, Serious Option 9st 13lb, Aqua Amber 9st 13lb, Alpha Leather 9st 10lb, Anif 9st 8lb.

BETTING: 7-2 Snowshill Shaker, 4-1 Fencer's Quest, 5-1 Alpha Leather, 7-1 Ritto, 8-1 Ketchican, 10-1 Aqua Amber, Schnozzle, 12-1 others

4.05 STRATFORD-ON-AVON NOVICE CHASE (CLASS D) £5,500 added 3m

1 221113 FATHER SKY (18) (D) (BF) O Sherwood 6 11 6 G Bradley B
2 03U11 DOMAINE DE PRON (17) (CD) Mrs L Taylor 6 11 3 R Bellamy
3 62/6U-14 MASTER TOBY (24) (D) N Tn-Davies 7 11 3 Mr J Goldstein (7)
4 120-1PP MELNIK (68) (BF) Mrs A Perrett 6 11 3 G Upton
5 FP5 BIG ARCHIE (77) Mrs A Bowlby 7 10 12 D Leahy
6 3 DEBONAIR DUDE (65) (BF) N Henderson 7 10 12 M A Fitzgerald
7 U10352- HI HEDLEY (378) G Hubbard 7 10 12 D Gallagher
8 45P0-02 LITTLE ELLIOT (20) (BF) Simon Earle 9 10 12 L Aspell (3)
9 4-P2006 JOY FOR LIFE (26) R Stronge 8 10 7 S Wynne
– 9 declared –

BETTING: 9-4 Father Sky, 11-4 Master Toby, 7-2 Domaine De Pron, 11-2 Melnik, 10-1 Debonair Dude, 12-1 Hi Hedley, 16-1 others

4.35 RICHARDSONS STAR SITE HUNTER CHASE (CLASS H) £2,500 added 2m 5f 110yds

1 1P1FPP- TUDOR FABLE (382) C Sweeting 9 12 10 Mr R Sweeting (7)
2 231-1/42 TUFFNUT GEORGE (33) Mrs P Granger 10 12 10 Mr A Phillips (7)
3 422-213 FOX POINTER (10) (BF) Mrs L Evans 12 12 7 Mr O McPhail (7)
4 P2-44F3 ABBOTSHAM (15) D Carter 12 12 0 Mr J Goldstein (7)
5 000/6P6- EASTERN PLEASURE (461) I Emmerson 10 12 0 Mr T J Berry (7)
8 003004- EMERALD RULER (341) A Peachey 10 12 0 Mr J T-Rolph (5)
7 0035-20 ERLEMO (224) Miss Sarah George 8 12 0 Dr P Pritchard (7) B
8 2F/024-P FRANK BE LUCKY (10) (D) Ms G A-Jones 11 12 0 Mr R Walley (7)
9 LORD KILTON Mrs O Cowley 9 12 0 Mr M Cowley (7) B
10 00- MANKIND (457) J de Giles 8 12 0 Mr L Baker (7)
11 3-4UU3P PRINZAL (15) (D) G McCourt 10 12 0 Mr M Armytage
12 1-F3PU3 PRO BONO (18) (D) Andy Morgan 7 12 0 Mr A Sansome (5)
13 4600P/-P SECRET CASTLE (294) Mrs L Lowe 8 12 0 Mr L Brown (7)
14 PPU-P1P STAR OATS (24) Mrs R Lampard 11 12 0 Mr A Kinane (7)
15 FP-U46 TELLAPORKY (24) T Hind 8 12 0 Mr A Middleton (7)
16 /P014-4 CANDLE GLOW (10) P Hutchinson 8 11 9 Mr P Hutchinson (7)
– 16 declared –

BETTING: 9-4 Fox Pointer, 7-2 Frank Be Lucky, 5-1 Tudor Fable, 13-2 Tuffnut George, 8-1 Prinzal, 10-1 Abbotsham, Pro Bono, 12-1 others

5.05 RICHARDSONS PARK H'CAP HURDLE (CLASS D) £3,000 added mares 2m 110yds

1 142412 BARFORD SOVEREIGN (17) (D) J Fanshawe 5 12 0 M A Fitzgerald
2 1-35012 HANDY LASS (4) (D) J Smith 8 11 1 Mr O McPhail (7)
3 312306 STAPLEFORD LADY (8) (D) J Moore 9 10 0 S McNeill
4 14241 SIBERIAN MYSTIC (40) (CD) P Murphy 4 10 0 W McFarland
5 P1 SECRET GIFT (21) Mrs J Pitman 4 10 0 D Leahy B
6 360P01 DAILY SPORT GIRL (5) (CD) B Llewellyn 6 10 0 (7ex) Mr J L Llewellyn
– 6 declared –

Minimum weight: 10st. True handicap weights: Siberian Mystic 9st 12lb, Secret Gift 9st 10lb, Daily Sport Girl 9st 10lb.

BETTING: 9-4 Secret Gift, 11-4 Siberian Mystic, 100-30 Barford Sovereign, 7-1 Stapleford Lady, 8-1 Daily Sport Girl, 16-1 Handy Lass

5.35 JENKINSONS NOVICE HURDLE (CLASS E) (DIV II) £2,000 added 2m 6f 110yds

1 31 MOUNTAIN PATH (52) N Henderson 7 11 4 M A Fitzgerald
2 626-231 SUPREME FLYER (33) K Bailey 7 11 4 Mr R Wakley (7)
3 0- ABOVE THE CLOUDS (365) Miss A N-Smith 6 10 12 P Henley (3)
4 23/P5-2 ARMATEUR (FR) (38) J McConnochie 9 10 12 D Leahy
5 40-0 FEARLESS HUSSAR (17) C Jackson 7 10 12 N Mann
6 0/- FOOLS FUTURE (908) Mrs J Retter 8 10 12 D Gallagher
7 LORD COOL C Brooks 6 10 12 C Brace (7)
8 PAT BUCKLEY N Twiston-Davies 6 10 12 Mr J Goldstein (7)
9 4004 WILLOWS ROULETTE (66) A Hobbs 5 10 12 S Greene
10 CLOUDY HOUSE N Lampard 8 10 7 Mr L Baker (7)
11 30622/ SKY BURST (723) Miss V Williams 7 10 7 G Upton
– 11 declared –

BETTING: 7-4 Mountain Path, 5-2 Supreme Flyer, 6-1 Pat Buckley, 10-1 Sky Burst, Lord Cool, 12-1 Willows Roulette, Armateur, 16-1 others

RACING RESULTS

NEWBURY

2.10: 1. **MIJANA** (L Dettori) 9-2; 2. **Kennet** 50-1; 3. **Chips** 9-4 fav. 8 ran. 2½, hd. (J Gosden, Newmarket). Tote: £4.40; £1.70, £6.00, £1.10. Dual Forecast: £81.90. Computer Straight Forecast: £155.13. Trio: £176.80. NR: Livingstone.

2.40: 1. **AMID ALBADU** (L Dettori) 9-1; 2. **Peartree House** 20-1; 3. **Sword Arm** 20-1; 4. **Noble Dane** 13-2. 18 ran. 4-1 fav Maftool. ¾, 10. (J Dunlop, Arundel). Tote: £6.20; £1.60, £3.70, £4.00, £1.60. DF: £130.30. CSF: £163.58. Tricast: £3,275.93. Trio: £671.50.

3.10: 1. **DANCE PARADE** (T Quinn) 16-1; 2. **Seebe** 5-1; 3. **Well Warned** 50-1. 10 ran. 4-7 fav Sleepytime (4th). ¾, ½. (P Cole, Whatcombe). Tote: £15.40; £2.50, £1.90, £7.90. DF: £41.30. CSF: £87.24. Trio: £222.80.

3.40: 1. **GHATAAS** (R Hills) 7-2 fav; 2. **Bassman** 100-1; 3. **Redbridge** 4-1. 18 ran. ½, 2½. (J Dunlop, Arundel). Tote: £3.50; £1.90, £38.40, £1.60. DF: £244.40. CSF: £367.93. Trio: £400.90. NR: Gee Bee Boy.

4.10: 1. **REPERTORY** (R Perham) 50-1; 2. **To The Roof** 11-1; 3. **Eastern Prophets** 6-1; 4. **That Man Again** 14-1. 20 ran. 3-1 fav Sea-Deer (5th). Sht-hd, ¾. (M Saunders, Wells). Tote: £111.40; £14.00, £2.90, £2.20, £2.80. DF: £675.10. CSF: £494.87. Tricast: £4,514.37. Trio: £1,853.40.

4.40: 1. **KOOL KAT KATIE** (O Peslier) 2-1 fav; 2. **Island Lore** 12-1; 3. **Selfish** 7-1. 19 ran. 1, 3½. (D Loder, Newmarket). Tote: £3.30; £1.80, £3.10, £3.80. DF: £38.00. CSF: £26.04. Trio: £64.00.

5.10: 1. **CANON CAN** (K Fallon) 11-8 fav; 2. **Top Cees** 11-1; 3. **Otto E Mezzo** 33-1. 12 ran. 3, ¾. (H Cecil). Tote: £2.50; £1.60, £3.10, £8.30. DF: £14.60. CSF: £17.21. Tricast: £338.36. Trio: £294.40. Jackpot: Not won; £35,341.73 carried forward to Newbury today.

Placepot: £887.50. Quadpot: £191.30. Place 6: £463.82. Place 5: £222.13.

AYR

2.00: 1. **CHOPWELL CURTAINS** (L Wyer) 11-2; 2. **Solomon's Dancer** evens fav; 3. **Bear Claw** 7-2. 9 ran. 2½, 4. (T Easterby, Malton). Tote: £8.40; £2.10, £1.10, £1.40. Dual Forecast: £4.70. Computer Straight Forecast: £9.04. Trio: £3.60.

2.30: 1. **MAHLER** (Mr J Goldstein) 14-1; 2. **Morpheus** 16-1; 3. **Hartdecent** 16-1; 4. **Nishamira** 11-2 fav. 18 ran. 1, ¾. (N Twiston-Davies, Cheltenham). Tote: £19.90; £3.50, £2.80, £7.00, £2.30. DF: £111.70. CSF: £209.24. Tricast: £3,321.85. Trio: £510.40.

3.00: 1. **MARELLO** (P Niven) 1-8 fav; 2. **Donnington** 9-1; 3. **Penrose Lad** 10-1. 8 ran. 1¼, 15. (Mrs M Reveley, Saltburn). Tote: £1.20; £1.10, £1.60, £1.10. DF: £2.50. CSF: £2.15.

3.30: 1. **DESTIN D'ESTRUVAL** (R Johnson) 7-1; 2. **Destiny Calls** 3-1 fav; 3. **Leotard** 12-1. 9 ran. 11, nk. (D Nicholson, Temple Guiting). Tote: £13.60; £3.50, £1.60, £3.20. DF: £14.10. CSF: £25.84. Tricast: £224.04. Trio: £248.50.

4.00: 1. **MEDITATOR** (S Curran) 100-1; 2. **Nirvana Prince** 16-1; 3. **Erzadjan** 10-1. 13 ran. 7-2 fav Young Kenny. ½, 5. (B De Haan, Lambourn). Tote: £113.70; £11.30, £3.90, £3.60. DF: £1,300.40. CSF: £1,159.60. Tricast: £14,712.16. Trio: £602.10.

4.30: 1. **JIGTIME** (Mr M Bradburne) 4-7 fav; 2. **Royal Jester** 11-2; 3. **Southern Minstrel** 25-1. 7 ran. 2¼, 12. (J Hughes, Galashiels). Tote: £1.60; £1.10, £1.70. DF: £2.50. CSF: £3.97.

5.00: 1. **SUPERTOP** (Mr A Gibson) 20-1; 2. **Captain Marmalade** 25-1; 3. **Fozzair** 12-1; 4. **Hand Of Straw** 100-1. 20 ran. 9-2 fav Flyaway Blues. 1¼, hd. (L Lungo, Carrutherstown). Tote: £61.90; £7.10, £8.10, £3.00, £20.90. DF: £1,374.80. CSF: £427.90. Tricast: £5,839.23. Trio: Not won.

Placepot: £130.60. Quadpot: £61.10. Place 6: £61.06. Place 5: £58.08.

THIRSK

2.20: 1. **DIVINE MISS-P** (W J O'Connor) 8-1; 2. **Two On The Bridge** 9-2; 3. **Prince Of Parkes** 14-1. 9 ran. 9-4 fav Truly Parched (5th). Nk, 2. (A Jarvis). Tote: £16.80; £2.70, £1.10, £2.60. Dual Forecast: £17.10. Computer Straight Forecast: £36.45. Trio: £51.60. NR: Jonny's Joker.

2.50: 1. **PENNILESS** (J Weaver) 6-1; 2. **Out Like Magic** 5-2; 3. **Antonia's Double** 9-4 fav. 7 ran. Hd, 1. (N Tinkler). Tote: £8.40; £3.10, £2.10. DF: £7.40. CSF: £22.11.

3.20: 1. **LAMARITA** (J Tate) 5-1; 2. **Lunar Mist** 12-1; 3. **Malibu Man** 11-4 fav. 9 ran. 2, sht-hd. (J Eustace). Tote: £6.60; £1.70, £2.00, £1.80. DF: £54.90. CSF: £64.37. Trio: £40.70.

3.50: 1. **REGAIT** (P Bloomfield) 14-1; 2. **Percy Isle** 10-11 fav; 3. **Surtsey** 11-10. 4 ran. 2½, 6. (M Jarvis). Tote: £12.20. DF: £7.80. CSF: £26.03.

4.20: 1. **PAINT IT BLACK** (Alex Greaves) 16-1; 2. **Diepol Gem** 6-1; 3. **Riccarton** 16-1; 4. **Godmersham Park** 16-1. 18 ran. 5-2 fav Eurobox Boy. ¾, nk. (D Nicholls). Tote: £20.10; £3.60, £2.00, £5.50, £6.80. DF: £50.30. CSF: £114.28. Tricast: £1,497.73. Trio: £304.20.

4.50: 1. **MERANTI** (R Ffrench) 2-1 fav; 2. **Foist** 5-1; 3. **Naughty Pistol** 14-1; 4. **Gulf Shaadi** 10-1. 16 ran. ¾, nk. (J M Bradley). Tote: £4.70; £1.20, £1.80, £2.50, £2.10. DF: £7.50. CSF: £12.33. Tricast: £129.91. Trio: £156.00.

Placepot: £2,947.60. Quadpot: £412.70. Place 6: £2,569.66. Place 5: £793.35

THE INDEPENDENT
RACING SERVICES
0891 261 +

LIVE COMMENTARIES		RESULTS
AYR	971	981
NEWBURY	972	982
THIRSK	973	983
STRATFORD	974	984
BANGOR	975	985

ALL COURSES RESULTS
0891 261 970

Calls cost 50p per minute. [illegible]

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Revoque to put work behind him

Racing

RICHARD EDMONDSON

When he looks down the greensward of the Manton gallops each morning Peter Chapple-Hyam sees one horse moving in a style which suggests he is wearing clogs. This colt is one of the worst-bred animals at the luxurious Wiltshire yard, and just about the cheapest. Revoque, however, also happens to be the champion two-year-old of Europe.

The huge bay colt has been reliable on the practice grounds this spring – struggling to keep up with the growth of the grass, and today will tell whether Revoque has carried forward the juvenile ability that allowed him to take the French treasures of the Prix de la Salamandre and Grand Criterium.

Today's Greenham Stakes at Newbury, it must be said, is hardly an auspicious trampoline for *a prospective* 2,000 *Guineas* winner. Wollow, in 1976, was the last horse to bounce on from a Greenham win to Guineas success, though Chapple-Hyam's Rodrigo De Triano triumphed over the Rowley Mile after a fourth in the 1992 Greenham.

Rodrigo De Triano, remember, used to leave a line of fire behind him when he worked on the gallops, while his great stable-companion, Dr Devious, was the forerunner for Revoque's *domestic lethargy*. "Rodrigo was an exceptional work horse, but Revoque's more like the Dr, who wouldn't tell you much on the gallops," Chapple-Hyam, said yesterday. "He works like him, a nothing horse. As a trainer you never know where you are with him, because he doesn't give you any clues."

A clue as large as fingerprints on a murder weapon should emerge today, however. Revoque faces the Dewhurst *Stakes winner, In Command*, whom he beat decisively in last August's Acomb Stakes. The latter's trainer, Barry Hills, *has* said his colt will come on a lot for the race, which will prime him for one of Europe's Guineas. This prompts the thought that In Command is not quite ready and, more importantly, probably not quite good enough to mix with the élite. **Revoque** (3.00) must toss him into the streets by the seat of his pants.

Manton is represented in the Spring Cup by Lionize, who will struggle to cope with last year's third in the race, **Cadeaux Tryst** (next best 3.30), while the yard's Chief Contender has it to do against **Sacrament** (2.30) in the John Porter Stakes.

The opener should go to Richard Rowe's **Ashby Hill** (2.00), who has been performing with vigour at home, though he has yet to overhaul one boarder at Ashleigh House. I'm Supposin (3.25) is reported to have recovered from his Champion Hurdle exertions, in which he finished fourth for Kevin Prendergast, and is ready to take the Scottish equivalent at Ayr.

The Future Champion Novices' Chase must go to **Sparky Gayle** (2.55) if the belief that he is to mature into a Gold Cup horse is to have credence, but there is less certainty about the Scottish National (Stakis Casino's *sponsorship gives a flavour* of the peril punters are facing).

Major Bell, the ante-post favourite, was taken out yesterday when his trainer, Alistair Whillans, found him lame, while the Grand National fourth, Buckboard Bounce, has Capt Adam Ogden (unable to use his 7lb claim) on board as Paul Carberry prefers Act The Wag.

The winner may be a horse who has been patrolling northern England and the Borders for *so long that he could once have* had a centurion on his back. **CAB ON TARGET** (nap 4.05) is considered on a good handicap mark even by his saturnine trainer, Mary Reveley.

RICHARD EDMONDSON
NAP: Cab On Target
(Ayr 4.05)
NB: Cadeaux Tryst
(Newbury 3.30)

Sleepytime caught napping

Sleepytime is beginning to be found in as many pockets as the Artful Dodger, **writes Richard Edmondson**. Henry Cecil's fil*ly suffered another dreadful* passage in the Fred Darling Stakes at Newbury yesterday and surrendered her position as favourite for the 1,000 Guineas.

Sleepytime, also blocked in during the Fillies' Mile at Ascot last September, is out to 5-1 for the Guineas with Ladbrokes, who have promoted Pas De Reponse to 7-2. Paul Cole's Dance Parade won yesterday's race, with Sleepytime fourth. "If I'd been able to get out earlier she would have won." Kieren Fallon, her jockey, said.

NEWBURY

2.00: HARDY DANCER, who ran his best race for some time when 2½ lengths fifth to Romios in the Rosebery Handicap at Kempton recently, is fairly handicapped at present and should go close. Anak-Ku and Vola Via looks the dangers.

□□□

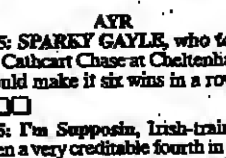
2.30: ELA-ARISTOKRATI, who shaped as if this distance would suit him last year, was unlucky (*his rider dropped his reins two furlongs out*) when half a length third to *Sacrament* and Salmon Ladder (3lb better off today) in the Group Three September Stakes over 1m 3f at Kempton.

□□□

3.00: REVOQUE, winner of the *Group One Prix* de la Salamandre and Grand Criterium over 7f and a mile at Longchamp last year, is sure to be fitter for this 2,000 Guineas pipe-opener but should still overwhelm these rivals if anywhere near his best. Muchea might prove the chief *threat*.

□□□

3.30: HAWKSLEY HILL, a short-head second to **Kuala Lipis** (a pound worse off today) in the Lincoln Handicap at Doncaster, can reverse those placings.



AYR

2.55: *SPARKY GAYLE*, who took the Cathcart Chase at Cheltenham, should make it six wins in a row.

□□□

3.25: I'm *Supposin*, Irish-trained when a very creditable fourth in the Champion Hurdle, has his first run for Sussex handler Richard Rowe but may not concede 16lb to impressive Cheltenham scorer *SHADOW LEADER*.

□□□

4.05: David Nicholson, who won this with an *11-year-old last year*, saddles **BARONET** this time and feels this seven-year-old will be suited by today's marathon trip. The 14-1 early price should be taken.

□□□

4.40: *EDREDON BLEU is only* five but has won six chases in France. He may now resume winning ways if handling this faster going.

SCOTTISH GRAND NATIONAL – 10-YEAR-TALE

	1987	88	89	90	[illegible]
[illegible] favourites	P	6	B	P	2
[illegible] places in [illegible]	0	3	2	0	6
[illegible]	12-1	9-1	4-1	25-1	40-1
[illegible]	10	9	11	9	8
[illegible] weight	[illegible]	10-0	10-4	10-0	10-0

[illegible] to £1 [illegible] £10.00 [illegible]
[illegible] of winners [illegible] 1st, 2nd or 3rd in last race: [illegible]
[illegible] winner: Roll-A-Joint 11-1 (1989)
[illegible] winner: [illegible] 40-1 (1990)
[illegible]: N Twiston-Davies – Captain Dibble (1992), Earth Summit (1994)
[illegible]: P Scudamore – Little Polveir (1987), Captain Dibble (1992)

Newbury – 3.30

Horse	C	H	L	T
Hawksley Hill	8-1	7-1	7-1	7-1
Kuala Lipis	8-1	8-1	8-1	8-1
Go Britannia	9-1	10-1	8-1	11-1
Sky Dome	10-1	11-1	8-1	10-1
Kala Sunrise	12-1	12-1	12-1	12-1
Unitus	9-1	12-1	9-1	11-1
Yalta	11-1	11-1	10-1	12-1
Cadeaux Tryst	14-1	14-1	12-1	14-1
Al Abraq	12-1	16-1	12-1	14-1
Secret Aly	16-1	14-1	14-1	14-1
Band On The Run	20-1	20-1	20-1	20-1
Grand Musica	20-1	16-1	20-1	16-1
Unitus	16-1	16-1	14-1	20-1
Medieval Lady	16-1	20-1	16-1	20-1
Hunters Of Brora	16-1	11-1	22-1	14-1
Almond Rock	22-1	20-1	25-1	14-1
Forza Figlio	20-1	20-1	20-1	20-1
Lonely Leader	20-1	20-1	33-1	20-1
Mabalinga	25-1	25-1	33-1	25-1
Saifan	25-1	25-1	33-1	25-1

Each-way a quarter the odds places 1, 2, 3, 4
C - Coral, H - William Hill, L - Ladbrokes, T - Tote

Ayr – 4.05

Horse	C	H	L	T
Stormtracker	6-1	13-2	6-1	6-1
Act The Wag	6-1	13-2	13-2	7-1
Cab On Target	8-1	7-1	8-1	7-1
Sister Stephanie	8-1	13-2	7-1	8-1
Kamikaze	9-1	10-1	10-1	10-1
Buckboard Bounce	12-1	10-1	11-1	10-1
Buckhouse Boy	12-1	12-1	12-1	12-1
Killeshin	12-1	12-1	12-1	12-1
Samlee	11-1	12-1	9-1	12-1
Baronet	14-1	10-1	8-1	10-1
Belmont King	12-1	16-1	16-1	12-1
Count Melody	16-1	14-1	16-1	16-1
Fiveleigh Builds	12-1	16-1	14-1	14-1
Dakyns Boy	25-1	20-1	20-1	20-1
Spuffington	28-1	33-1	33-1	25-1
Parsons Brig	66-1	100-1	66-1	66-1
Highlandman	100-1	100-1	150-1	66-1
Off The Bru	100-1	100-1	150-1	100-1

Each-way a quarter the odds, places 1, 2, 3, 4
C - Coral, H - William Hill, L - Ladbrokes, T - Tote

AYR

HYPERION

1.55 Shu Gaa
2.25 House Captain
2.55 Sparky Gayle
3.25 Shadow Leader
4.05 BARONET (nap)
4.40 Edredon Bleu
5.10 River Mulligan
5.40 Benvenuto

GOING: Good.
■ Left-hand galloping course; run-in 210yds.
■ Course is east of town on A758. Ayr rail station (service from Glasgow) 1m. ADMISSION: Club £20; Grandstand £10 (Students & OAPs £5). CAR PARK: Free.
■ LEADING TRAINERS WITH RUNNERS: G Richards — 51 winners from 203 runners gives a success ratio of 25.1% and a loss to a £1 level stake of £6.96; Mrs M Reveley — 39 winners, 164 runners, 23.8%, -£74.58; C Parker — 18 winners, 115 runners, 15.7%, -£21.72; P Monteith — 18 winners, 144 runners, 10.4%, -£65.78.
■ LEADING JOCKEYS: P Niven — 35 winners, 154 rides, 22.7%, -£61.63; A Dobbin — 34 winners, 173 rides, 19.7%, +£1.46; B Storey — 30 winners, 181 rides, 15.7%, +£1.49; T Reed — 18 winners, 146 rides, 11.0%, -£70.82.
BLINKERED FIRST TIME: Shu Gaa (1.55); Buckhouse Boy (4.05); No Pain No Gain (4.40); Killeshin (visored, 4.05). WINNERS IN THE LAST SEVEN DAYS: Act The Wag (4.05) won at Sedgefield on Saturday.
LONG-DISTANCE RUNNERS: Muhtadi (1.55), Sound Statement (2.55), I'm Supposin (3.25), Spuffington (4.05), No Pain No Gain (4.40), Basak & Normania (5.40) all sent 425 miles-plus from West Sussex.

1.55 ALBERT BARTLETT AND SONS NOVICE HANDICAP HURDLE (CLASS C) £6,000 added 4YO 2m

1 132110 RICASEL (USA) (38) (CD) (BF) (Allan W Melville) P Monteith 12 0 — R Dunwoody
2 1041 SHU GAA (42) (D) (Al K Al Jaber) O Sherwood 11 5 — J Osborne B
3 015 MUHTADI (28) (D) (The C 1 8 B Partnership) Lady Herries 11 0 — R Johnson
4 04625 MELTEMISON (56) (Lucky Seven Racing Club) M Hammond 10 11 — R Garritty
5 213 CLASH OF SWORDS (29) (D) (Mrs Janis MacPherson) P Calver 10 8 — L Wyer
6 000411 SOUSSE (19) (D) (Wrekin Racing Partnership) Mrs M Reveley 10 1 — G Lee
7 0052 ALPINE JOKER (38) (BF) (The Cobra Partnership) P Hobbs 10 0 — R Tormey
– 7 declared –
Minimum weight: 10st. True handicap weight: Alpine 9st 12lb.
BETTING: 2-1 Shu Gaa, 7-2 Muhtadi, 6-1 Sousse, 13-2 Alpine Joker, 15-2 Meltemison, Ricasel, 12-1 Clash of Swords
1996: Tough Test 8 9 10 G Cahill 12-1 (Mrs J Goodfellow) 9 ran

2.25 HAMLET EXTRA MILD CIGARS GOLD CARD HANDICAP HURDLE (CLASS B) £12,000 added 2m 6f

1 11-F4P4 CASTLEKELLYLEADER (66) (P K Barber, Mick Coburn, T Curry) P Nicholls 8 11 10 — P Hide
2 11-1114 TULLYMURRY TOFF (36) (D) (BF) (J H Wilson) Riley J M Jefferson 8 11 5 — E Callaghan (3)
3 121363 FREDDIE MUCK (16) (Cheltenham Racing) N Twiston-Davies 7 10 13 — C Llewellyn
4 112-100 EXECUTIVE DESIGN (36) (C) (L 7 Foster) Mrs M Reveley 5 10 11 — P Niven
5 F01112 SHERIFFMUIR (15) (J J W Wadham) Mrs L Wadham 8 10 9 — J F Titley
6 139-110 SUPREME LADY (38) (D) (Supreme Lady Partnership) Miss H Knight 8 10 8 — J Culloty
7 1-44344 OUTSET (15) (CD) (Mark Hilsed M Hammond) 7 10 8 — Mr C Bonner (3)
8 3-F3141 CELESTIAL CHOIR (18) (C) (Mrs Carole Sykes) J L Eyre 7 10 7 — B Storey
9 580565 DR LEUNT (18) (Peter Emery) P Hobbs 8 10 6 — G Tormey
10 214/32P HOUSE CAPTAIN (15) (Mr & Mrs G Middlebrook) J FitzGerald 8 10 4 — P Carberry
11 641264 SOLBA (USA) (19) (Mr & Mrs R Anderson Green) C Parker 8 10 0 — D Parker B
– 11 declared –
Minimum weight: 10st. True handicap weight: Solba 9st 12lb.
BETTING: 4-1 Tullymurry Toff, 5-1 Celestial Choir, Freddie Muck, 7-1 Sheriffmuir, 8-1 Supreme Lady, 15-2 Executive Design, 10-1 Outset, 12-1 Dr Leunt, House Captain, 20-1 others
1996: Penny A Day 8 11 4 P Niven 2-1 (Mrs M Reveley) 9 ran

2.55 EDINBURGH WOOLLEN MILLS FUTURE CHAMPION NOVICE CHASE (CLASS A) (Grade 2) £22,000 2m 4f

1 4-11111 SPARKY GAYLE (37) (CD) (L Mrs Raymond Anderson Green) C Parker 7 11 10 — B Storey
2 1211P6 STATELY HOME (37) (D) (P Bowen) P Bowen 8 11 10 — R Johnson
3 060-221 CHIEF MINISTER (63) (G Shiel) M Hammond 8 11 3 — R Garritty
4 P1P12P CROWN EQUERRY (15) (D) (Robert Ogden) G Richards 7 11 3 — P Carberry
5 USF112 MACGEORGE (55) (D) (BF) (J H Watson) R Lee 7 11 3 — R Dunwoody
6 P0 SOUND STATEMENT (2) (Maurice E Pinto) Miss S Edwards 8 11 3 — Mr T Hills
7 21F050 THE REVEREND BERT (2) (The Bolle Club) B Balding 9 11 3 — R Fenton
8 2525-F1 WITH IMPUNITY (42) (Guest Leasing & Bloodstock Co Ltd) P Nicholls 8 11 3 — A P McCoy
9 6-1225F GUINDA (28) (Mrs J K Powell) N Twiston-Davies 7 10 12 — C Llewellyn
– 9 declared –
BETTING: 6-4 Sparky Gayle, 4-1 Stately Home, 6-1 Crown Equerry, 7-1 Chief Minister, 8-1 Macgeorge, 9-1 Guinda, 20-1 The Reverend Bert, 25-1 With Impunity, 50-1 Sound Statement
1996: Addington Boy 8 11 10 A Dobbin 5-2 (G Richards) 5 ran

FORM GUIDE

Stately Home is a smart front-runner on his day but recent performances suggest that his busy spell has caught up with him. SPARKY GAYLE won the Cathcart Chase at Cheltenham and is unbeaten over fences this season. But apart from Cheltenham, Sparky Gayle hasn't been highly tried, winning minor events without taking much out of himself. He should be fresh enough even at this stage of the campaign. Chief Minister was rated higher over hurdles than Sparky Gayle and looks the danger. Selection: SPARKY GAYLE

3.25 SAMSUNG SCOTTISH CHAMPION HURDLE (LIMITED HANDICAP) (CLASS A) (Grade 2) £25,000 2m

1 114 I'M SUPPOSIN (35) (D) (Nicholas Cooper) R Rowe 5 11 7 — R Dunwoody
2 006103 DREAMS END (14) (D) (T R Pace) P Bowen 8 10 11 — A P McCoy
3 206-220 MASTER BEVELED (53) (CD) (Mrs E I Williams) P Evans 7 10 6 — Mr R Thornton (3)
4 6024-P4 CLIFTON BEAT (USA) (14) (D) (D B O'Connor) P Hobbs 8 10 8 — C F Swan
5 100505 ZABADI (14) (D) (Lady Harris) D Nicholson 5 10 6 — R Johnson
6 111 SHADOW LEADER (38) (D) (James Blackshaw) C Egerton 8 10 5 — J Osborne
7 F1F-P18 EDELWEIS DU MOULIN (FR) (70) (D) (BF) (Robert Ogden) G Richards 5 10 4 — P Carberry
8 010616 KADASTROF (FR) (18) (D) (A P Paton) R Dickin 7 10 4 — X Aizpuru (5)
9 1-3F450 HOME COUNTIES (63) (CD) (Roxy Cinemas Ltd) D Moffatt 8 10 4 — D J Moffatt
10 6-30013 EXPRESS GIFT (42) (D) (Homer, Young, Arnold) Mrs M Reveley 8 10 4 — N Williamson
11 P-41112 INGLETONIAN (28) (C) (D) (BF) (Mrs H MacTaggart) B Mactaggart 8 10 4 — B Storey
– 11 declared –
Minimum weight: 10st. True weights: Home Counties 10st 3lb, Express Gift 10st 2lb, Ingletonian 9st 8lb.
BETTING: 7-4 Shadow Leader, 9-4 I'm Supposin, 8-1 Dreams End, 9-1 Edelweis du Moulin, 11-1 Clifton Beat, 12-1 Express Gift, Zabadi, 18-1 Kadastrof, Master Beveled, 33-1 Home Counties
1996: Alderbrook 7 11 7 R Dunwoody 8-11 (K Bailey) 9 ran

FORM GUIDE

Alderbrook was classy enough to give away the weight 12 months ago and *I'm Supposin*, previously with Kevin Prendergast in Ireland, will be fancied to do the same on his first start for Richard Rowe. I'm Supposin's fourth at Make A Stand at Cheltenham was an excellent run on only his third outing over hurdles and there's no reason why he shouldn't benefit from the experience. Only an hour or so before the Champion Hurdle, SHADOW LEADER won the Supreme Novice Hurdle – by an impressive 10 lengths in only a slightly slower time (but admittedly carrying 5lb less than I'm Supposin). Like the topweight, however, Shadow Leader is the sort that can improve at this game and the 16lb he receives could make all the difference. Zabadi finished in front of Dreams End in the Champion but Cheltenham isn't Dream End's track and he turned the form round in Stanley's handicap at Aintree, beating Clifton Beat there as well. A tough customer, Dreams End is back over a hurdles having finished a more-than-respectable sixth in the Group Three Earl of Sefton Stakes at Newmarket on Wednesday, a performance that suggests he's ready at take advantage if the novices are found wanting. Selection: SHADOW LEADER

4.05 STAKIS SCOTTISH GRAND NATIONAL HANDICAP CHASE (CLASS A) (Grade 3) £69,610 4m 1f

1 1F5/1P2 BELMONT KING (42) (Mrs Billie Bond) P Nicholls 9 11 10 — A P McCoy
2 2/10-P04 BUCKBOARD BOUNCE (12) (Robert Ogden) G Richards 11 11 7 — Captain A Ogden
3 FF22PF BUCKHOUSE BOY (15) (The Bawdy Boys) N Twiston-Davies 7 11 0 — C Maude B
4 P2-1122 CAB ON TARGET (15) (C) (BF) (N Hurst) Mrs M Reveley 11 10 12 — P Niven
5 P53440 KILLESHIN (12) (D) (H J Manners) H Manners 11 10 9 — S Curran V
6 3-B123R SISTER STEPHANIE (28) (The Arewick Partnership) D McCain 8 10 8 — R Dunwoody
7 241225 FIVELEIGH BUILDS (15) (C) (Miss L V Russell) Miss L V Russell 10 10 5 — A Thornton
8 2-11212 STORMTRACKER (38) (Tim Davis) C Weedon 8 10 3 — M Richards
9 040-14F KAMIKAZE (35) (Major B Gatensbury) K Bailey 7 10 2 — C O'Dwyer B
10 1F-1130 BARONET (38) (Mrs David Thompson) D Nicholson 7 10 2 — R Johnson
11 111041 ACT THE WAG (7) (Robert Ogden) M Todhunter 8 10 1 — P Carberry B
12 P-2413U COURT MELODY (48) (BF) (Axon, Barber, Coburn) P Nicholls 9 10 1 — Mr R Thornton (3) B
13 U0/2400 DAKYNS BOY (12) (Alan Parker) N Twiston-Davies 12 10 0 — C Llewellyn
14 311241 SAMLEE (42) (White Lion Partnership) P Hobbs 8 10 0 — N Williamson
15 338331 SPUFFINGTON (12) (Julian Cooper) J Gifford 9 10 0 — P Hide
16 1/46245 PARSONS BRIG (597) (J S Haldane) J Haldane 11 10 0 — A S Smith
17 031212 OFF THE BRU (27) (C BF) (File 'chasing' Mrs S Bradburne 12 10 0 — Mr M Bradburne (7)
18 P0-0122 HIGHLANDMAN (15) (Mrs Hugh Fraser) J Haldane 11 10 0 — Mr Chris Wilson
– 18 declared –
Minimum: 10st. True weights: Spuffington 9st 7lb, Parsons Brig 9st 5lb, Off The Bru 9st 2lb, Highlandman 9st.
BETTING: 6-1 Stormtracker, 15-2 Act The Wag, Cab On Target, 8-1 Sister Stephanie, 10-1 Kamikaze, 11-1 Killeshin, 12-1 Baronet, Buckhouse Boy, Buckboard Bounce, Samlee, 14-1 Belmont King, 16-1 Dakyns Boy, 20-1 Fiveleigh Builds, 33-1 Spuffington, 50-1 others
1996: Moorcroft Boy 11 10 2 M Dwyer 20-1 (D Nicholson) 20 ran

FORM GUIDE

SISTER STEPHANIE is one of several that would prefer some cut in the ground, she refused to race in the Irish National and she fell the last time that Richard Dunwoody rode her (although she was involved in a real tussle that day with King Lucifer, winner of the Kim Muir Chase at Cheltenham last month). But a mare like Sister Stephanie might be best forgiven for not jumping off at Fairyhouse – she was an excellent third to Bilbygat Gruff at Punchestown on a previous visit to Ireland – and she looks just the sort for this following her third in the Midlands National at Uttoxeter. The two that beat her there were the improving young stayer Seven Towers and, of course, Lord Gyllene. Moorcroft Boy also finished third at Uttoxeter before winning this last year. Belmont King's second to Avonburn at Chepstow shows he can carry big weights but there was plenty of give that day and he might need soft ground more than most. Fourth behind Lord Gyllene in the Grand National, Buckboard Bounce is having only his fourth run of the season but the vast majority of his rider's wins have been in amateur events and it's impossible to ignore the fact that Paul Carberry is on the same owner's Act The Wag. First-time blinkers (on again today) enabled Act The Wag to defy a big weight last Saturday, but that was at Sedgefield and there were some out-of-form horses still pretty close until they departed two from home there. Buckhouse Boy is blinkered for the first time, presumably to get him at concentrate on his jumping. It remains to be seen if the headgear does the trick but Nigel Twiston-Davies won this in 1992 and 1994 with Captain Dibble and Earth Summit and Sweet Duke was second to Willsford in 1995. Like those three, Buckhouse Boy is a novice who ran in the Royal SunAlliance Novice Chase at Cheltenham, although he was pulled up there. Baronet, eighth in the same contest, also represents a yard with a good record in recent years. Besides winning with Moorcroft Boy, the stable had the fourth and fifth in 1995 and Bishops Island was second to Earth Summit a year earlier. Stormtracker has done nothing wrong since going chasing and beat all bar Flyer's Nap at Cheltenham, while Kamikaze is another novice to consider. He must bounce back from a fall at Uttoxeter but was clear when falling at the last and will surely turn out better than he has shown in just these races. Selection: SISTER STEPHANIE

4.40 CLIENT ENTERTAINMENT SERVICES HANDICAP CHASE (CLASS C) £7,000 added 2m

1 35315F POLITICAL TOWER (14) (CD) (G R G Keon) R Nixon 10 11 10 — B Storey
2 211304 MASTER ODDY (14) (D) (Mrs R M Hill) J King 11 11 10 — 7 J Murphy
3 111520 EDREDON BLEU (FR) (72) (Jim Lewis) Miss H Knight 5 11 7 — R Dunwoody
4 1311-00 STORM FALCON (USA) (37) (D) (E R Dalby) S Mellor 7 10 12 — Chris Webb (5)
5 F52345 NO PAIN NO GAIN (18) (CD) (The Marvellous Partnership) J Gifford 9 10 12 — P Hide B
6 121112 WEAVER GEORGE (39) (D) (BF) (Regent Decorators Ltd) W Storey 7 10 6 — M Moloney
7 512113 MONYMAN (66) (D) (BF) (Trevor Hemmings) M Hammond 7 10 2 — N Williamson
8 1F2423 GOLDEN HELLO (19) (D) (G E Shouler) T Easterby 8 10 2 — L Wyer
9 24-1311 RALLEGIO (37) (CD) (Gunne Robertson) P Monteith 8 10 0 — Mr R Thornton (3)
– 9 declared –
Minimum weight: 10st. True handicap weight: Rallegio 9st 8lb.
BETTING: 4-1 No Pain No Gain, 9-2 Political Tower, 5-1 Master Oddy, 6-1 Edredon Bleu, Golden Hello, 7-1 Monyman, 9-1 Weaver George, 10-1 Rallegio, 12-1 Storm Falcon
1996: Port In A Storm 7 10 0 Mr C Bonner 4-1 (M Hammond) 5 ran

FORM GUIDE

Josh Gifford must feel that NO PAIN NO GAIN has been looking after himself a little, hence the first-time blinkers, and the headgear might not need to have a dramatic effect to give the Findon horse a chance. Winner of a novice event at this meeting last year, No Pain No Gain has slipped down the handicap and coming back to two miles might help. Political Tower is back on familiar territory after taking his chance in the two-mile handicaps at Cheltenham and Aintree. Master Oddy contested the same two races and neither horse is badly handicapped. Although a remote 12th in the Midway Of Flats, Storm Falcon wasn't unfenced, suggesting he's on the way back to the sort of form that won him six chases a couple of years ago. Weaver George, who has been beating small fields at minor tracks, faces a tougher task today, while Rallegio is 6lb out of the handicap but might still do better than two other novices, Golden Hello and Monyman. Golden Hello hasn't been very convincing over fences so far and Monyman might need this after a break of almost three months. Selection: NO PAIN NO GAIN

5.10 GLENMUIR FUTURE CHAMPION STANDARD OPEN NATIONAL HUNT FLAT (CLASS H) (DIV I) £2,000 added 2m

1 11- SIREN SONG (623) (D) (Michael H Watt) C Mann 8 12 0 — R Dunwoody
2 1 RED CURATE (48) (D) (Mrs M Turner & Mr C Whale) G McCourt 8 11 11 — A P McCoy
3 10 SAMUEL WILDERSPIN (58) (D) (County Graphic Colour) D Nicholson 5 11 11 — B Massey (5)
4 1 SIMONS CASTLE (81) (D) (Mrs Barbara Marchant) R O'Sullivan 4 11 5 — R Johnson
5 01 SOCIETY TIMES (USA) (72) (D) (A S McPherson) D Nolan 4 11 5 — N Williamson
6 BINGLEY BANK (Mrs J Mould) N Twiston-Davies 5 11 4 — C Llewellyn
7 BLAKE'S ORPHIN (Ashleybank Investments Ltd) G Richards 5 11 4 — R Burns (7)
8 LORD OF THE RIVER (G 7 Stewart-Brown) O Sherwood 5 11 4 — J Osborne
9 PERRYMAN (Mrs S C Ellen) K Bailey 8 11 4 — C O'Dwyer
10 RADICAL STORM (W M Aitchison) I Charlton 5 11 4 — K Johnson
11 REALLY USEFUL (Robert Ogden) Mrs S Hall 5 11 4 — P Carberry
12 RIVER MULLIGAN (St Mellion Estates Ltd) P Hobbs 5 11 4 — C F Swan
13 THE OPERATOR (Greystoke Stables Ltd) G Richards 8 11 4 — L O'Hara
14 0 HEIDIQUEENOFCLUBS (88) (David Langdon) N Twiston-Davies 5 10 13 — C Maude
15 BALA PYJAMA (Aykroyd and Sons Ltd) R Fahey 4 10 12 — L Wyer
16 SHANAHALL MOR (Paul Fitzpatrick) Martin Todhunter 4 10 12 — C McCormack (7)
17 0 DONNYBROOK (56) (R Smith (York)) B Woodhouse 4 10 12 — R Garritty (5)
18 KINGS MEASURE (John H Wilson) J Jefferson 4 10 12 — E Callaghan (3)
19 OH SO COSY (& Mrs Raymond Anderson Green) C Parker 4 10 12 — B Storey
20 JOWOODY (Mrs Dorothy Thomson) Mrs D Thomson 4 10 7 — D Parker
– 20 declared –
BETTING: 9-4 Samuel Wilderspin, 4-1 Red Curate, 7-1 Siren Song, 8-1 Simons Castle, 9-1 River Mulligan, 10-1 Lord Of The River, Perryman, 12-1 Bingley Bank, 14-1 Really Useful, 20-1 others
1996: Marello 5 10 13 G Cahill 7-4 (Mrs M Reveley) 20 ran

5.40 GLENMUIR FUTURE CHAMPION STANDARD OPEN NATIONAL HUNT FLAT RACE (CLASS H) (DIV II) £2,000 added 2m

1 61 BENVENUTO (51) (D) (Mrs Lucia Farmer) K Bailey 6 11 11 — C O'Dwyer
2 1 SO NATIVE (33) (D) (Trevor Hemmings) Mrs S Smith 5 11 11 — R Wilkinson (5)
3 41 BASAK (86) (D) (Michael H Watt) Lady Herries 5 11 11 — R Dunwoody
4 2 CARLINGFORD TYKE (49) (Jostngo Racing) J Carr 5 11 4 — G Cahill
5 CHOCOLATE DRUM (The Claret and Blue Partnership) J Bothell 8 11 4 — M Moloney
6 DECOUPAGE (J F Dean) C Egerton 5 11 4 — N Williamson
7 KINDALOO (& Mrs Raymond Anderson Green) C Parker 5 11 4 — B Storey
8 2 NORMANIA (NZ) (80) (Maurice E Pinto) Miss S Edwards 5 11 4 — Mr T Hills
9 SKILLWISE (Chris D Calvert) T Easterby 5 11 4 — L Wyer
10 STEALS YER THUNDER (Sean Lucey) Mrs A Bowlby 5 11 4 — A Thornton
11 THE VILLAGE WAY (St Mellion Estates Ltd) D Nicholson 5 11 4 — R Johnson
12 TIED FOR TIME (Miss L Robertson) Miss H Knight 5 11 4 — J Culloty
13 WILLIAM OF ORANGE (Special Reserve Racing) G Richards 5 11 4 — L O'Hara
14 35 WOODFIELD VISION (42) (BF) (Feckley Holdings Ltd) Mrs M Reveley 8 11 4 — P Niven
15 0 GLEVUM (28) (Mrs J K Powell) N Twiston-Davies 5 10 13 — C Llewellyn
16 HACK ON (Mrs A E Goodwin) P Hobbs 5 10 13 — G Tormey
17 NEEDLE THREAD (Cox Foods Limited) G Richards 5 10 13 — R Burns (7)
18 0 OPEN FAIRWAY (26) (Whitworth Racing) M Dods 4 10 12 — R McGrath (5)
19 VALHALLA (Great Head House Estates Limited) M Todhunter 4 10 12 — A P McCoy
20 GEM OF HOLLY (R S Wood) R Wood 4 10 7 — Mr R Thornton (3)
– 20 declared –
BETTING: 7-2 Benvenuto, Basak, 6-1 The Village Way, 8-1 Normania, 10-1 So Native, Woodfield Vision, 12-1 Decoupage, Tied For Time, 14-1 Skillwise, Steals Yer Thunder, Valhalla, 20-1 others
1996: see division one

NEWBURY

HYPERION

2.00 Hardy Dancer
2.30 Ela-Aristokrati
3.00 Revoque
3.30 Hawksley Hill (nb)
4.00 Arian Da
4.30 Alezal
5.00 King Sound
5.30 Rainwatch

GOING: Good to Firm.
STALLS: Round course – inside; straight course – centre. DRAW ADVANTAGE: None.
■ Left-hand, level course.
■ Course is south-east of town near A34. Railway station (service from London, Paddington) adjoins course. ADMISSION: Members £17; Tattersalls £10; Silver Ring £4 (OAPs half price) Accompanied 17-year-olds or under free all enclosures. CAR PARK: Free; Picnic area £4 per car plus £4 per person.
■ LEADING TRAINERS WITH RUNNERS: P Chapple-Hyam — 36 winners from 149 runners gives a success ratio of 24.2% and a loss to a £1 level stake of £20.73; J Gosden — 29 winners, 118 runners, 24.6%, +£79.68; R Hannon — 36 winners, 393 runners, 8.68%, -£180.72; P Cole — 21 winners, 177 runners, 11.9%, +£13.71.
■ LEADING JOCKEYS: J Reid — 50 winners, 262 rides, 19.1%, +£57.72; L Dettori — 36 winners, 188 rides, 19.1%, +£56.28; Pat Eddery — 30 winners, 248 rides, 12%, -£102.24; T Quinn — 29 winners, 234 rides, 12.4%, +£13.60.
BLINKERED FIRST TIME: None. WINNERS IN LAST SEVEN DAYS: None.
LONG-DISTANCE RUNNERS: Hunters Of Brora (3.30) sent 237m by J Bethell from Middleham, N Yorks; Hawksley Hill (3.30) sent 232m by Mrs J Ramsden from Sandhutton, N Yorks.

2.00 GRUNDON RECYCLE HANDICAP (CLASS D) £8,000 added 1m 2f Penalty Value £6,353

RATINGS

1 110150 ROCKFORCE (28) (G Z Mizel) M Channon 5 10 0 — R Hughes 11 83
2 34250 ROYAL SEATON (19) (CD) (Axminster Carpets) Mrs B Duffield 8 9 13 — D Holland 20 82
3 3260-22 VOLA VIA (USA) (7) (B M Smart) I Balding 4 9 11 — L Dettori 16 85
4 112230- SHAFT OF LIGHT (184) (D) (The Queen) Lord Huntingdon 5 9 11 — D Harrison 17 —
5 14162-0 DOCKLANDS LIMO (19) (D) (Mrs Lisa Olley) B McMath 4 9 11 — T Quinn 12 80
6 113500- DIMINUTIVE (USA) (177) (D) (Gainsbury Partnership) J Hills 4 9 11 — M Henry (3) 18 84
7 30903-0 SERENDIPITY (FR) (19) (D) (H R R Partnership) B R Millman 4 9 11 — W J O'Connor 4 81
8 431/ BAY OF ISLANDS (598) (D) (Bloomsbury Stud) D Morris 5 9 8 — N Day 19 —
8 204010- EDAN HEIGHTS (181) (CD) (T R Mountain) S Dow 5 9 8 — A Daly (5) 1 83
10 111215- PISTOL (224) (Mrs B Sumner) C Horgan 7 8 8 — Paul Eddery 3 86
11 1-30100 PUNKAH (USA) (8) (D) (McCourt Fine Meats) G McCourt 4 9 7 — R Studholme (7) 10 78
12 /8504/8 MYRTLE QUEST (21) (Miss M Shallter) R Charlton 5 9 7 — T Sprake 22 —
13 4522- GRAND SPLENDOUR (191) (Andy Holder) Lady Herries 4 9 8 — A Clark 14 97
14 00060-5 HARDY DANCER (19) (BF) (Peter L Higson) G L Moore 5 9 8 — S Whitworth 9 94
15 580300/ VIRTUAL REALITY (548) (D) (Ash Partnership) J Toller 6 9 3 — S Sanders 2 —
16 815660- SHINING EXAMPLE (177) (D) (D M Ahern) P Makin 5 9 1 — J Fortune 21 79
17 6/420- OPALETTE (136) (Angmering Park Stud) Lady Herries 4 8 1 — Declan O'Shea 13 88
18 52312-1 ANAK-KU (15) (D) (Sultan Ahmad Shah) Miss G Kelleway 4 9 1 — K Fallon 6 78
19 316110- ASHBY HILL (180) (D) (Miss Mezel Tulrell) R Rowe 8 9 0 — R Cochrane 8 88
20 0253-03 PAY HOMAGE (7) (Miss A V Hill) I Balding 9 8 13 — R Perham (7) 7 88
21 044020- FLETCHER (191) (Lady Margadale) H Morrison 3 8 13 — Dane O'Neill 5 82
22 100040- GREEN BOPPER (USA) (177) (J P M & J W Cook) C Murdock 4 8 13 — R Perham 15 88
– 22 declared –
BETTING: 5-1 Hardy Dancer, 6-1 Vola Via, 8-1 Myrtle Quest, 10-1 Grand Splendour, 12-1 Anak-Ku, Ashby Hill, Pistol, 14-1 Diminutive, Pay Homage, 16-1 Edan Heights, Rockforce, Royal Seaton, 20-1 Docklands Limo, Opalette, Shaft Of Light, Shining Example, 33-1 others
1996: Al's Alibi 3 8 10 Pat Eddery 12-1 (W Musson) 12 ran

FORM GUIDE

All the better for his opening run this season when fifth of 20 to Romios in the Rosebery at Kempton, HARDY DANCER can show the way home here. He had some useful form in 1995 when he won his first two starts, at Leicester and Kempton, and has dropped down in the weights as a result of finishing unplaced on his last eight outings in 1996. The selection holds Royal Seaton and Docklands Limo, who finished ninth and 17th of 20 in the Rosebery, though Royal Seaton, backward then, will strip fitter today. Vola Via, who has finished runner up in his two races this term, behind Mad Militant and Angel Face both at Warwick, can again figure with Frankie Dettori booked. The four-year-old had stablemate Pay Homage more than two lengths back in third on the latter occasion and the pair met on identical terms. Pistol scored four times in 1996, all under today's rider Paul Eddery, and can go well despite his 225-day absence. Selection: HARDY DANCER

2.30 LANES END JOHN PORTER STAKES (CLASS A) (Group 3) £30,000 1m 4f Pen Value £20,940

1 311320- SACRAMENT (132) (D) (Cheveley Park Stud) M Stoute 8 9 3 — W R Swinburn 3 115
2 211521- MONGOL WARRIOR (180) (D) (H de Nemtwald) Lord Huntingdon 4 9 2 — D Harrison 7 —
3 212221- SALMON LADDER (USA) (175) (CD) (M Arbib) P Cole 5 9 1 — T Quinn 11 116
4 5/01423- ELA-ARISTOKRATI (224) (Andreas Michael) M Tompkins 5 8 12 — R Cochrane 2 115
5 0/12104- ELECTION DAY (161) (C) (Lord Weinstock) M Stoute 5 8 12 — K Fallon 9 118
6 81/0122- KUTTA (181) (C) (Hamdan Al Maktoum) R Armstrong 5 8 12 — R Hills 10 119
7 112233- LORD JIM (182) (D) (Mrs B Y Thomas) Lord Huntingdon 5 8 12 — Dane O'Neill 12 V 109
8 15- AIR QUEST (347) (C) (K Abdullah) R Charlton 4 8 11 — Pat Eddery 5 98
9 123330- CHIEF CONTENDER (175) (D) (Mrs John Magnier) P Chapple-Hyam 4 8 11 — J Reid 8 114
10 21/511-3 PROPER BLUE (USA) (19) (M J Legg) T Mills 4 8 11 — S Sanders 1 118
11 464135- SAMRAAN (USA) (202) (CD) (K M Al-Mudhaf) J Dunlop 4 8 11 — L Dettori 9 120
12 181236- BEAUCHAMP JADE (202) (D) (E Penser) H Candy 5 8 9 — C Rutter 4 102
13 184524- WHITEWATER AFFAIR (176) (J M Greetham) M Stoute 4 8 8 — D Peslier 13 111
– 13 declared –
BETTING: FORECAST: 7-2 Samraan, 4-1 Sacrament, 9-2 Salmon Ladder, 13-2 Kutta, 8-1 Ela-Aristokrati, 10-1 Election Day, 12-1 Proper Blue, 14-1 Air Quest, Chief Contender, 16-1 Whitewater Affair, 33-1 Lord Jim
1996: Spout 4 8 8 T Sprake 8-1 (R Charlton) 9 ran

FORM GUIDE

SALMON LADDER, tenth in Lammtarra's Derby, was later operated on for a wind problem and didn't come into his own until he was a four-year-old last term, going from strength to strength to win four times. Sent up to Hamilton for the first of those victories, he wound up by beating Kutta three parts of a length in the Group Three St Simon Stakes over course and distance, while in between those wins he landed valuable handicaps at Ascot and Goodwood. Paul Cole's charge went well in his Kempton gallop and he might be just that little bit fitter than Kutta, who has a 3lb pull compared to the St Simon. Salmon Ladder found Sacrament a neck too good in the September Stakes but can reverse that although worse off 3lb, while he can again beat Ela-Aristokrati (neck away third). Also holding sound claims is St Leger third Samraan, another who enjoyed a great 1996 with four wins, including the King George V Handicap at Royal Ascot. Coming from John Dunlop's stable, the Green Dancer colt will be sharp enough. The going might be too lively for Election Day, who had but in the ground when successful over further here last term. Selection: SALMON LADDER

3.00 TRIPLEPRINT GREENHAM STAKES (CLASS A) (Group 3) £30,000 3YO 7f Penalty Value £19,500

1 1-14 HAYES WAY (28) (Alan E Ward) T Mills 9 0 — S Sanders 6 95
2 13231- IN COMMAND (183) (D) (Maktoum Al Maktoum) B Hills 9 0 — M Hills 5 114
3 132112- MUCHEA (198) (Ashton Investments) M Channon 9 0 — R Hughes 1 114
4 1111- REVOQUE (185) (D) (R E Sangster) P Chapple-Hyam 9 0 — J Reid 4 119
5 1320- THE WEST (USA) (183) (HRH Prince Fahd Salman) P Cole 9 0 — T Quinn 2 107
6 41- YALAIETANEE (239) (D) (Maktoum Al Maktoum) M Stoute 8 0 — L Dettori 3 21
– 6 declared –
BETTING: 8-13 Revoque, 7-2 In Command, 11-2 Muchea, 7-1 The West, 13-1 Yalaietanee, 33-1 Hayes Way
1996: Danehill Dancer 3 9 0 Pat Eddery evens (N Callaghan) 8 ran

FORM GUIDE

Unbeaten after four runs as a juvenile, REVOQUE, second favourite for the 2,000 Guineas, is reported in good shape and should retain his 100 per cent record. Trained by Peter Chapple Hyam, who won this with Turtle Island (1994), Revoque went in at Ascot last July on his introduction and followed up in the Acomb Stakes at York, while he scored by three lengths from The West in the Prix de la Salamandre over today's trip at Longchamp in September and beat Majorien a couple of lengths in the Grand Criterium over a mile at the same track the following month. In Command was also a smart youngster. An impressive winner at the big Goodwood meeting on his debut, Barry Hills' handsome colt was placed in his next three runs before coming good again in the Group One Dewhurst at Newmarket on his final appearance, gamely mastering Musical Pursuit by a head. Over this extra furlong, In Command can reverse running with Muchea, who finished a length in front of him when they filled the places behind Bahamian Bounty in the Middle Park. Having said that, Muchea was the epitome of consistency as a juvenile and will run his usual honest race. Yalaietanee showed the benefit of his debut fourth to Blue River at Newmarket last August when justifying favouritism on the same course a fortnight later and should do well this year. Selection: REVOQUE

3.30 LADBROKES SPRING CUP (HANDICAP) (CLASS B) £25,000 1m Penalty Value £18,075

1 326414- CADEAUX TRYST (181) (D) (Maktoum Al Maktoum) E Dunlop 5 10 0 — D O'Donohoe (3) 10 106
2 3/1446-5 LONELY LEADER (30) (Salem Suhail) R Hannon 4 9 12 — Dane O'Neill 11 108
3 014040- MABALINGA (133) (D K R & Mrs J B C Oliver) Lady Herries 5 9 12 — Declan O'Shea 18 108
4 1/22150- ALMOND ROCK (196) (CD) (CIT Racing Ltd) J Fanshawe 5 9 8 — D Harrison 9 107
5 5210- UNITUS (263) (Sheikh Mohammed) M Stoute 4 9 7 — J Reid 2 97
6 100- LIONIZE (USA) (188) (M Tabor) P Chapple-Hyam 4 9 6 — Paul Eddery 14 100
T 82510-2 HAWKSLEY HILL (28) (D) (BF) (P R C Morrison) Mrs J Ramsden 4 9 8 — J Fortune 17 105
8 22124-0 GRAND MUSICA (28) (Mech 3 Racing) I Balding 4 9 4 — Martin Dwyer (–) 6 106
9 5416-41 KUALA LIPIS (USA) (28) (D) (HRH Sultan Ahmad Shah) P Cole 4 9 4 — T Quinn 15 104
10 16/6040- AL ABRAQ (280) (Abbott Racing Partners) J Hills 4 9 4 — M Hills 5 103
11 50000-3 BAND ON THE RUN (30) (D) (D J Allen) B McMahon 10 9 2 — S Sanders 12 104
12 11005-0 SKY DOME (28) (D) (Miss O J Mason) M Tompkins 4 8 13 — R Hills 7 100
13 02155- GO BRITANNIA (252) (D) (S Frisby) D Loder 4 8 13 — L Dettori 4 101
14 06401-5 KALA SUNRISE (28) (D) (A E Needham) C Smith 4 8 12 — W J O'Connor 20 107
15 206001- SAIFAN (168) (D) (Mrs L Brook) D Morris 8 8 12 — N Day 18 8 105
16 52/130- MEDIEVAL LADY (185) (C) (Summerlee Stud) I Balding 4 8 12 — R Cochrane 10 101
17 24135- FORZA FIGLIO (282) (D) (Gold Partnership) Miss G Kelleway 4 8 12 — D Peslier 3 105
16 213- YALTA (246) (D) (Lord Weinstock) R Charlton 4 8 12 — Pat Eddery 16 102
10 033/00-0 HUNTERS OF BRORA (28) (D) (Robert Gibbons) J Bethell 7 8 11 — D Holland 8 102
20 60-2812 SECRET ALY (CAN) (19) (D) (B H Voak) C Brittain 7 8 11 — B Doyle 1 109
– 20 declared –
BETTING: 13-2 Hawksley Hill, 8-1 Kuala Lipis, 9-2 Sky Dome, 10-1 Kala Sunrise, Unitus, Yalta, 12-1 Go Britannia, Hunters Of Brora, 14-1 Al Abraq, Cadeaux Tryst, Medieval Lady, 16-1 Almond Rock, Grand Musica, Lionize, Secret Aly, 20-1 Band On The Run, Lonely Leader, 25-1 others
1996: Royal Philosopher 4 8 13 M Hills 25-1 (J Hills) 20 ran

FORM GUIDE

Inched out by Kuala Lipis (who had the advantage of an all-weather run two weeks before) in the Lincoln, HAWKSLEY HILL can avenge that defeat on a pound better terms, while he should confirm the form with Kala Sunrise, Sky Dome, Hunters Of Brora and Grand Musica, who were in arrears. Hawksley Hill had a tremendous season in 1996, chalking up six wins and four seconds. Hunters Of Brora encountered trouble in running on Town Moor except for which she would have finished closer and she might make the frame this time. Cadeaux Tryst gained his single success of last season in Turkey, winding up with a fourth to sixlength scorer Decorated Hero at Longchamp. He is on 10st but, smart claimer Daragh O'Donohoe takes off 3lb and Ed Dunlop's yard has made a bright start this season. Almond Rock, beaten half a length by Star Manager at Sandown first time up a year ago and also runner-up next time, came good at Ripon in August. However, he was unplaced on his two subsequent runs, including when beating only two home in the 38-runner Cambridgeshire with Hawksley Hill seven lengths in front of him in seventh. Unitus, after a neck second to Balladur over today's trip at Windsor in July, stormed home by five lengths at Kempton (1m 2f maiden). His running when tailed off behind St Mawes in the Gordon Stakes over a mile and a half at Goodwood on July 30 was too bad to be true. Selection: HAWKSLEY HILL

4.00 NETHERAVON MEDIAN AUCTION MAIDEN STAKES (CLASS D) £5,000 added 2YO fillies 5f 34yds Penalty Value £3,818

1 2 ARIAN DA (18) (J Hamilton-Jones) B Palling 8 11 — T Sprake 5
2 BURNING LOVE (Miss Juliet E Reed) J S Moore 8 11 — K Fallon 11
3 CHRYSALIS (Christopher Wright) P Cole 8 11 — T Quinn 10
4 DIXIE CROSSROADS (A F Merritt) R Hannon 8 11 — R Hughes 8
5 FACE-OFF (N Ahamad) R Hannon 8 11 — Dane O'Neill 1
6 HAMERRA (M Meade) M Meade 8 11 — D Sweeney (5) 8
7 5 MAGICAL DANCER (11) (The Piccolo Boys) Mrs N Dutfield 8 11 — D Holland 7
8 PHONE ALEX (J B R Leisure Ltd) R Hannon 8 11 — Pat Eddery 2
9 PRINCESS LONDIS (C Richards) A Foster 8 11 — R Perham 4
10 RING THE RAFTERS (The Queen) I Balding 8 11 — L Dettori 12
11 SUN IN THE MORNING (David F Powell) B Meehan 8 11 — B Doyle 3
12 0 SUPREME ANGEL (19) (Least Moved Partners) M Muggeridge 8 11 — M Henry (3) 9
– 12 declared –
BETTING: 5-2 Chrysalis, 100-30 Phone Alex, 7-2 Ring The Rafters, 8-1 Arian Da, 10-1 Sun In The Morning, 12-1 Face-Off, 14-1 Burning Love, Hamerra, Dixie Crossroads, 20-1 others
1996: Cherry Blossom 2 8 11 Pat Eddery 6-5 (R Hannon) 7 ran

4.30 BOB RILEY 50TH BIRTHDAY MAIDEN STAKES (CLASS D) (DIV I) £4,300 added 3YO 1m Penalty Value £3,428

1 2- ALEZAL (178) (Howard Spooner) W Jarvis 9 0 — O Peslier 5
2 40- BEGORRAT (198) (R A Bernard) B Meehan 9 0 — B Doyle 17
3 BLEWBURY HILL (Anthony Pye-Jeary) R Johnson Houghton 9 0 — S Sanders 8
4 CHIEF MONARCH (Miss N Jefford) B Smart 8 0 — R Cochrane 8
5 3 FOREIGN RULE (19) (R E Sangster) P Chapple-Hyam 9 0 — J Reid 9
6 GREEK PALACE (Lord Weinstock) M Stoute 8 0 — W R Swinburn 3
7 LEGENDARY LOVER (Maron Myers) R Charlton 9 0 — R Hughes 1
8 6- MEMORISE (USA) (173) (K Abdullah) H Cecil 8 0 — K Fallon 15
9 MISTRAL LORD (H F George Racing) M Madgwick 8 0 — D Harrison 4
10 MOONSHIFT (Saeed Suhail) M Stoute 8 0 — K Bradshaw 15
11 MOWELGA (Hesmonds Stud) Lady Herries 9 0 — Paul Eddery 7
12 64- PRAEDITUS (177) (B A Kilpatrick) R Hannon 9 0 — Dane O'Neill 2
13 0 PREMIER ECLIPSE (10) (Twelve Gems) P Harris 9 0 — Pat Eddery 18
14 RASHIK (Hamdan Al Maktoum) W R Hern 8 0 — R Hills 10
15 RIVER PILOT (Lady Rothschild) R Charlton 9 0 — T Sprake 11
16 SMART KID (HRH Sultan Ahmad Shah) P Cole 9 0 — T Quinn 12
17 WALKABOUT (K Abdullah) B Hills 9 0 — M Hills 14
– 17 declared –
BETTING: 5-2 Alezal, 9-2 Foreign Rule, 11-2 Memorise, 7-1 Greek Palace, 8-1 Smart Kid, 10-1 Walkabout, 12-1 Legendary Lover, Rashik, River Pilot, 14-1 Praeditus, 16-1 Mowelga, 20-1 others
1996: Nash House 3 9 0 J Reid 4-9 (P Chapple-Hyam) 14 ran

5.00 ARLINGTON INTERNATIONAL RACECOURSE STAKES (CLASS B) £12,000 added 3YO 1m 2f Penalty Value £7,962

1 413- KING SOUND (186) (C) (Sheikh Mohammed) J Gosden 9 1 — L Dettori 8
2 213- FALAK (USA) (197) (Hamdan Al Maktoum) W R Hern 8 13 — R Hills 7
3 1-2 MERSEY BEAT (48) (D) (K Higson) G L Moore 8 11 — K Fallon 10
4 3-1 MINERSVILLE (USA) (18) (Sheikh Mohammed) J Gosden 8 11 — A Clark 1
5 555600- OUT OF SIGHT (161) (D J Allen) B McMahon 8 11 — S Sanders 9
6 3412 ROYAL AMARETTO (177) (The Harlequin Partnership) B Meehan 8 11 — O Peslier 4
7 1 SINGLE EMPIRE (18) (A K Collins) P Chapple-Hyam 8 11 — J Reid 5
8 1 SOPHOMORE (176) (K Abdullah) B Hills 8 11 — Pat Eddery 8
9 21- APACHE STAR (173) (A E Oppenheimer) G Wragg 8 8 — M Hills 2
10 21350-3 RAINDANCING (21) (N Hayes) R Hannon 8 6 — Dane O'Neill 3
– 10 declared –
BETTING: 2-1 Royal Amaretto, 5-2 King Sound, 11-2 Falak, Minersville, 13-2 Single Empire, 7-1 Sophomore, 10-1 Raindancing, 12-1 Apache Star, 20-1 others
1996: High Baroque 3 8 13 J Reid 9-1 (P Chapple-Hyam) 5 ran

5.30 BOB RILEY 50TH BIRTHDAY MAIDEN STAKES (CLASS D) (DIV II) £4,300 added 3YO 1m Penalty Value £3,428

1 5-3 ABAJANY (23) (John Wiles and Partners) M Channon 8 0 — P P Murphy (5) 8
2 60- BOLD SAINT (224) (Shining Force) P Harris 9 0 — W R Swinburn 9
3 BORDER FALCON (Sir William Purves) I Balding 9 0 — L Dettori 14
4 DALLIANCE (Sheikh Mohammed) M Stoute 9 0 — A Clark 11
5 GOLDEN SADDLE (USA) (Thomas T S Liang) P Cole 9 0 — T Quinn 6
6 HEVER GOLF GLORY (Hever Racing Club) T J Naughton 9 0 — S Sanders 4
7 ISLAND SANCTUARY (Dr Carlos E Stelling) P Makin 8 0 — J Fortune 7
8 0- KHAFAAQ (177) (Hamdan Al Maktoum) W R Hern 9 0 — Paul Eddery 1
9 MAMALIK (USA) (Hamdan Al Maktoum) J Gosden 9 0 — R Hills 10
10 6- MYSTIC RIDGE (325) (Mrs Anne Coughlan) D Elsworth 9 0 — R Cochrane 13
11 POLISHED STEEL (Maktoum Al Maktoum) Lady Herries 9 0 — Declan O'Shea 12
12 5- RAINWATCH (211) (Hesmonds Stud) J Dunlop 9 0 — Pat Eddery 2
13 3- ROYALE FINALE (173) (Wafic Said) H Cecil 9 0 — K Fallon 5
14 TEME VALLEY (K Abdullah) R Charlton 9 0 — T Sprake 18
15 GOOD REPUTATION (R E Sangster) B Hills 8 8 — D Holland 15
16 0- INTERREGNUM (274) (Repent At Leisure Partnership) A Foster 8 9 — R Perham 3
– 16 declared –
BETTING: FORECAST: 5-2 Rainwatch, 9-2 Mamalik, 5-1 Royal Finale, 6-1 Border Falcon, Good Reputation, 10-1 Dalliance, Golden Saddle, Khafaaq, 12-1 Teme Valley, 14-1 Abajany, 20-1 others
1996: see division one

THIRSK

HYPERION

2.20 Captain Bliss 2.50 Surprise Mission 3.20 Venture Capitalist 3.50 Pearl Venture 4.20 Starborough 4.50 In Good Nick 5.20 Three Arch Bridge

GOING: Good to Firm (Good in places).
STALLS: Straight - stands side; round course – inside.
DRAW ADVANTAGE: High for 5f and 6f.
■ Left-hand course, level but quite sharp.
■ Course is W of town on A61. Thirsk station 1m. ADMISSION: Club £12; Tattersalls £8 (OAPs £4); Family Enclosure £3 (OAPs £1.50). Accompanied under-16s free. CAR PARK: Family Enclosure £3 per car including up to four adults plus all children; remainder free.
BLINKERED FIRST TIME: Captain Bliss (2.20), Diamond Steve (visored) (2.20).
WINNERS IN THE LAST SEVEN DAYS: Angel Face (5.20) won at Warwick on Saturday.
LONG-DISTANCE RUNNERS: Hazel (4.50) sent 296 miles by Miss Gay Kelleway from Whitcombe, Dorset.

2.20 KNAYTON CLAIMING STAKES (CLASS F) £3,500 added 2YO 5f

1 43 CAPTAIN BLISS (8) (BF) N Tinkler 8 3 — Aimee Cook (5) 2 B
2 TOLL'S TIMES M W Easterby 8 3 — Dale Gibson 5
3 WAIT'N'SEE M W Easterby 8 3 — T Lucas 9
4 CRAFTY PET R Fahey 8 12 — A Culhane 1
5 04 MY BET (8) M W Easterby 8 12 — G Parkin (5) 4
6 CARNATION KING W S M Turner 8 5 — R Havlin (3) 3
7 0 SKIPPOOL CREEK (14) T Easterby 8 8 — M Birch 11
8 0 DIAMOND STEVE (10) P Evans 8 7 — J F Egan 12 V
9 0 GENERAL JOEY (8) M Dods 8 7 — C Teague (3) 8
10 5 ELLENBROOK (14) J Berry 8 6 — K Darley 10
11 0 DAYNABEE (14) N Tinkler 8 2 — Kim Tinkler 7
12 FLEA IN YOUR EAR M Meade 7 10 — L Charnock 6
– 12 declared –
BETTING: 11-4 Ellenbrook, 7-2 Captain Bliss, 5-1 My Bet, 6-1 Carnation King, 10-1 Skippool Creek, 12-1 Diamond Steve, Crafty Pet, Flea In Your Ear, 16-1 Wait'n'see, Toll's Times, Daynabee, 20-1 General Joey

2.50 THOMAS LORD HANDICAP (CLASS C) £10,000 added 5f

1 621030- SWYNFORD DREAM (175) (D) J Bottomley 4 8 13 — J Lowe 18
2 400211- STUFFED (178) (CD) M W Easterby 5 9 12 — G Parkin (5) 16
3 000500- TWICE AS SHARP (182) (D) P Harris 5 8 11 — G Hind 18
4 000300- FOR THE PRESENT (218) T D Barron 7 9 10 — K Darley 15
5 04030-0 ZIGGY'S DANCER (USA) (15) (D) E Alston 6 8 8 — G Duffield 1
6 2210-44 SWINO (21) (D) P Evans 3 9 8 — J F Egan 12
7 1400-31 SURPRISE MISSION (19) (D) Mrs J Ramsden 5 8 3 — S Drowne 21
8 50140-5 TUSCAN DAWN (23) (CD) (BF) J Berry 7 9 2 — P Roberts (5) 17
9 226051 CHEMCAST (23) (D) J L Eyre 4 8 1 — R Lappin 8 9
10 301112- JUST BOB (337) (C) (D) S Kettlewell 8 9 — Joanna Beeson (7) 7
11 310210- BOWLERS BOY (189) (D) J Quinn 4 8 13 — T Williams 4
12 20005-0 INSIDER TRADER (25) (D) Mrs J Ramsden 6 8 12 — M Deering 19
13 000300- ROYAL DOME (189) (D) M Wane 5 8 12 — J Carroll 20
14 152120 SQUIRE CORRIE (26) (D) D Chapman 5 8 11 — A Culhane 11
15 50-5502 DANDE FLYER (24) (D) D Arbuthnot 4 8 11 — G Carter 9
16 00040-0 LADY SHERIFF (2) (CD) M W Easterby 8 8 9 — J Quinn 5 8
17 0000-00 CROSS THE BORDER (11) (CD) D Nichols 4 8 4 — Iona Wands (7) 2
18 00050-0 BLESSINGINDISGUISE (25) (D) M W Easterby 4 8 3 — T Lucas 8
19 430030- HERE COMES A STAR (176) (C) (D) J Carr 9 8 1 — L Charnock 14
20 304045 CAPTAIN CARAT (19) (D) D Nicholls 8 8 1 — Dale Gibson 10
21 6000-80 GONETSIO (11) (D) N Tinkler 4 7 11 — Kim Tinkler 8
– 21 declared –
BETTING: 5-1 Surprise Mission, 6-1 Twice As Sharp, 7-1 Stuffed, 8-1 Tuscan Dawn, 10-1 Squire Corrie, Royal Dome, 12-1 Dande Flyer, Captain Carat, Ziggy's Dancer, 14-1 Blessingindisguise, Bowlers Boy, 16-1 Swino, Swynford Dream, Lady Sheriff, Insider Trader, 20-1 others

3.20 MICHAEL FOSTER MEMORIAL STAKES (CLASS C) £10,000 added 6f

1 00060-0 SEA DANE (19) (D) P Harris 4 9 7 — G Hind 1
2 22300-5 VENTURE CAPITALIST (28) (CD) D Nicholls 8 9 7 — Alex Greaves 2
3 30050-4 WESTCOURT MAGIC (14) (CD) M W Easterby 4 9 7 — L Charnock 4
4 15-1202 CRETAN GIFT (14) (D) N Littmoden 8 8 0 — T R McLaughlin 6 8
5 0/2135-0 WATCH ME (19) (D) (BF) R Hannon 4 8 12 — J Carroll 3
6 104- JIHAZI (176) D Loder 3 8 8 — K Darley 6
7 215- SOVIET STATE (141) (D) P Chapple-Hyam 9 8 8 9 — Havlin (3) 8
8 222153- YOUNG BIGWIG (217) (D) J Berry 3 8 3 — G Carter 7
– 8 declared –
BETTING: 5-2 Watch Me, 11-4 Venture Capitalist, 5-1 Jihazi, 6-1 Sea Dane, 7-1 Young Bigwig, 8-1 Soviet State, 10-1 Westcourt Magic, 16-1 Cretan Gift

3.50 RACING CHANNEL LIMITED STAKES (CLASS E) £4,100 added 1m 4f

1 114-400 FAIRY KNIGHT (19) (D) R Hannon 5 8 10 — K Darley 4
2 442145- CONTRAFIRE (238) (D) Mrs A Swinbank 5 9 8 — J Supple 8
3 0/0003-3 DESERT FIGHTER (30) Mrs M Reveley 6 9 8 — A Culhane 2
4 000/50- KAITAK (248) J Carr 8 9 8 — L Charnock 7
5 22060-0 LOOKINGFORARAINBOW (19) (CD) B Jones 8 8 8 — M Wigham 5
6 5233/00 SLASHER JACK (10) (D) D Nicholls 8 8 8 — Alex Greaves 1
7 054000- PEARL VENTURE (188) S Woods 5 9 5 — D Biggs 3
8 240-5 NILE VALLEY (19) P Chapple-Hyam 3 7 13 — R Cody-Boutcher (7) 2
– 8 declared –
BETTING: 9-4 Lookingforarainbow, 7-2 Nile Valley, 4-1 Desert Fighter, 5-1 Fairy Knight, 6-1 Pearl Venture, 7-1 Contrafire, 12-1 Slasher Jack, 14-1 Kaitak

4.20 THIRSK CLASSIC TRIAL STAKES (CLASS B) £15,000 added 3YO 1m

1 211- INTIKHAB (USA) (178) D Morley 9 5 — G Carter 1
2 213522- CAVIAR ROYALE (250) T Barron 8 0 — J Carroll 2
3 134- STARBOROUGH (177) (C) D Loder 9 0 — K Darley 8
– 3 declared –
BETTING: FORECAST: 5-4 Starborough, 11-8 Intikhab, 4-1 Caviar Royale

4.50 BYLAND RATING RELATED MAIDEN STAKES (CLASS F) £3,500 added 7f

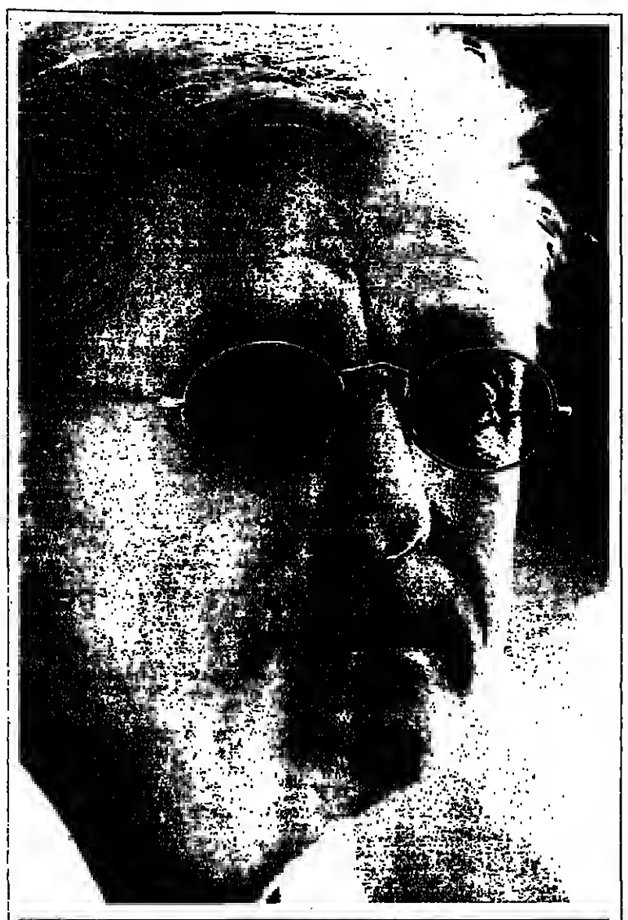
1 65/0- STAR OF RING (372) M Heaton-Ellis 4 9 10 — S Drowne 4
2 530- CARREAMIA (158) J L Eyre 4 9 7 — D Pears (3) 1
3 506000- HADADABBLE (152) Pat Mitchell 4 8 7 — M Fenton 3
4 00-3306 HAZEL (25) Miss Gay Kelleway 5 9 7 — R Smith (7) 2
5 6245-00 SANTELLA KATIE (100) Mrs L Stubbs 4 9 7 — M Rimmer 11
6 060-040 SERAPE (14) Mrs L Stubbs 4 9 7 — J F Egan 7
7 4220-04 SWISS COAST (17) N Tinkler 3 8 11 — K Darley 6
8 03800- BEWITCHING LADY (175) D Arbuthnot 3 8 8 — G Carter 10
9 06080- DANCE MELODY (159) R Osbold 3 8 6 — R Farmer (7) 5
10 043040- HONG KONG EXPRESS (231) J Berry 3 8 8 — P Fessey (5) 8
11 30455-0 IN GOOD NICK (8) M W Easterby 3 8 8 — G Parkin (5) 9 8
– 11 declared –
BETTING: FORECAST: 3-1 Bewitching Lady, 7-2 In Good Nick, 4-1 Carreamia, 5-1 Star Of Ring, 6-1 Hong Kong Express, 8-1 Hazel, 10-1 others

5.20 LEVY BOARD HANDICAP (CLASS D) £5,000 added fillies 1m

1 621254- BLESSED SPIRIT (194) (D) C Wall 4 10 0 — A Culhane 12
2 210-101 ANGEL FACE (USA) (7) P Evans 4 9 10 — J F Egan 13
3 5310/0- CROSSEM (380) B Hollinshead 4 9 8 — F Lynch (3) 7
4 31600-1 SYLVAN PRINCESS (18) (D) D Cosgrove 4 8 5 — M Rimmer 14
5 4450-00 CASHMERE LADY (29) (D) J L Eyre 5 8 4 — R Lappin 11
6 040810 THREE ARCH BRIDGE (14) (D) (BF) M Johnston 5 9 1 — Dale McKeown 3 R
7 2/080-00 LA VOLTA (14) J FitzGerald 4 9 1 — J Quinn 15
8 20210-6 BEST OF ALL (8) (D) J Berry 5 8 12 — K Darley 5 8
9 34-8 PERFECT POPPY (45) I Fanshawe 3 8 9 — N Varley 8
10 5200- CHORUS SONG (176) P Chapple-Hyam 3 8 8 — R Havlin (3) 4
11 342350- LILLIBELLA (215) Mrs I Ramsden 4 8 5 — S Drowne 2
12 4415-0 LEGEND OF ARAGON (11) J Glover 3 8 1 — G Duffield 8
13 3160-84 MARSH MARIGOLD (88) (BF) J Hetherton 3 7 10 — L Charnock 1
14 03-1550 BALLARD LADY (23) (D) J Wainwright 5 7 10 — J Bramhill (5) 10
15 50-2341 DIAMOND EYRE (57) J L Eyre 3 7 10 — R Mullen (5) 5
– 15 declared –
Minimum weight: 7st 10lb. True handicap weights: Ballard Lady 7st 9lb, Diamond Eyre 7st 4lb.
BETTING: 3-1 Sylvan Princess, 4-1 Three Arch Bridge, 11-2 Angel Face, 6-1 Best Of All, Blessed Spirit, 8-1 Chorus Song, Perfect Poppy, 12-1 others

sport

Defending the numbers game



ROY EVANS' CONTINENTAL APPROACH: WING-BACKS AND THREE CENTRE-BACKS

Personnel

Many and varied. Stig Inge Bjornebye is the left wing-back and, until Wednesday, when he was replaced by Rob Jones, Jason McAteer was on the right. Mark Wright and Bjorn Tore Kvarme are regulars in the centre with Dominic Matteo, Steve Harkness, Phil Babb and Neil Ruddock competing for the third spot.

Strengths

Width going forward, good support for midfield, strong in defensive centre.

Weaknesses

Vulnerable on the flanks, needs athletic wing backs, temptation to defend too deep.

Flexibility

Good since Jones' return as McAteer would struggle defensively as a conventional full-back. Harkness can play on the flanks while the other central defenders all have experience of playing in a four.

Glenn Moore analyses the different tactical approaches Liverpool and Manchester United will use in today's vital Premiership match at Anfield

Roy has three, though it is sometimes five and he is thinking of four. Alex has tried five but prefers four. Arsène has five but wants four – while Ruud and Martin nominally have five but change to four on special occasions.

Confused? It would not be surprising, we are talking tactics, defensive tactics, and even the people who are supposed to operate them can be left bewildered by the jargon. Ask Steve Clarke, who recently recalled Chelsea's preparation for an FA Cup tie at Bristol City. "We were playing a sweeper system as Graham Roberts was back from suspension so we spent an hour-and-a-half in the hotel the evening before working out our tactics with a Subbuteo board. It didn't work – but we would have beaten them at Subbuteo."

To some it is all gobbledegook, football is about players, their heart and their art. It may have been once, but in the modern game organisation is required as well, especially in defence. This morning's crucial match between Liverpool and Manchester United illustrates the development of defensive strategy.

English defences used to be cast in the same mould. Two hard-as-nails full-backs who put their wingers in the gravel track with the first tackle, a beef-eating stopper who battered the centre-forward, and his Brylcreemed sidekick, almost as big, almost as nasty, but more mobile.

No longer – because foreign habits have intruded. While Alex Ferguson's Manchester United play four at the back, Liverpool have gone Continental with three in the centre and wing-backs making up a five when under pressure.

Not that either are totally convinced. Ferguson tried playing five, with a view to Europe, in the pre-season build-up two years ago. They trotted out for the opening game against Aston Villa and were 3-0 down by the interval. They reverted to four and have stuck to it ever since. Evans, meanwhile, having invested so much faith in playing with wing-backs at Liverpool, is now reconsidering in the aftermath of the Paris St-Germain débâcle.

There are other waverers. In recent weeks, both Ruud Gullit's Chelsea and Martin O'Neill's Leicester City have changed from their customary five to a four to deal with special problems. Gullit wanted defensive strength and width to combat Wimbledon's power and mobility in last week's FA Cup semi-final, O'Neill wanted a base from which Pontus Kamark could man-mark Juninho in the Coca-Cola Cup final.

Both changes worked, but Evans is unlikely to make such a fundamental switch today. The summer is the time for that, as Arsène Wenger, a fan of the four, decided when he arrived at Highbury in mid-season. But who is right?

In theory playing three/five provides the flexibility to win the numbers game in midfield, the key area of modern football. Ideally one of the central three has the ball skills to step into midfield, with or without the ball, while his partners mark. Those players need to be capable of playing in the centre where reading the game and aerial strength are paramount, and on the flanks where mobility and quick-footedness are needed.

RACE FOR THE TITLE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Man Utd	33	19	9	5	66	38	66
Liverpool	34	18	10	6	57	30	64
Arsenal	34	18	9	7	57	28	63

Remaining fixtures

Manchester United
TODAY Liverpool (A); 3 May Leicester (A); 8 May Middlesbrough (H); 8 May Newcastle (H); 11 May West Ham (H).

Liverpool
TODAY Manchester United (H); 3 May Tottenham (H); 8 May Wimbledon (A); 11 May Sheffield Wednesday (A).

Arsenal
TODAY Blackburn (H); 21 April Coventry (A); 3 May Newcastle (H); 11 May Derby (A).

This is one reason why United prefer a four, their central defenders, David May and Gary Pallister, are uncomfortable in wide areas, as Pallister showed when playing for England in Norway and May in his unhappy period at right-back. If United changed systems, one of them would have to be left out. A problem with this system for English teams is that there are very few genuine sweepers. Mark Wright and Dominic Matteo have done a reasonable job of it at Liverpool, but neither are in the Matthias Sammer class.

The wing-backs provide width in midfield when going forward and protection on the flanks when defending. They need to be athletic, adept at going forward but also defensively aware. Dan Petrescu is the best example in the Premiership, David Ginola probably the worst due to his defensive inadequacies and positional indiscipline. Liverpool have Stig Inge Bjornebye, a defender, and, usually, Jason McAteer, an attacking midfielder, on the flanks. Both are athletic and good crossers.

Liverpool are generally sound defensively, their recent lapses are down to poor concentration and David James' handling errors. Their problem is going forward, but that may stem from the back.

Wenger believes the system delays a passing team, as Arsenal are becoming and Liverpool are, when attacking. "The problem is you defend deeper," he said, "and though you have more security in the centre you are less dangerous offensively on the wings.

"I would like to attack and defend in a higher position. When you defend deep it is a problem because you need five, six, eight passes on the way to goal and that is a long way to go, especially on a narrow pitch like Highbury. If a team defends well, you sometimes need to find a way in the air instead. We might go to a four next year."

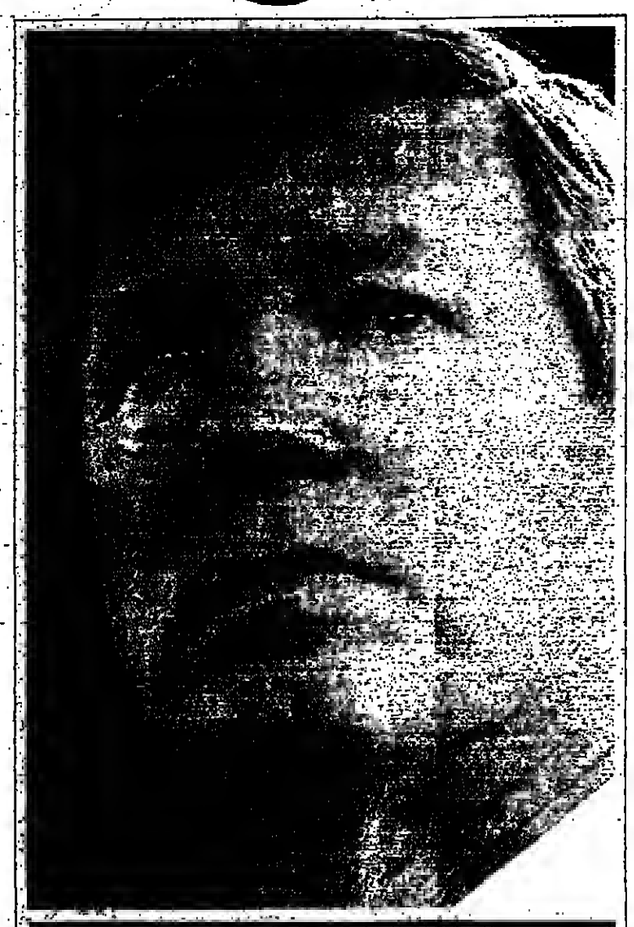
The four is not really a four, it is an eight as the midfield are interlinked. The central midfielders, in United's case Roy Keane and Nicky Butt, protect Pallister and May, while the wide men cover the full-backs – it was said Sammy Lee extended Phil Neal's career at Liverpool by five years.

United's wide men, David Beckham and Ryan Giggs, though attacking by nature, are expected to do their share of graft – witness Gary Neville bawling out Beckham in Dortmund after he let Jörg Heinrich go past him on the overlap to create a chance for Andy Möller.

The irony is that English teams, like Liverpool, Chelsea, Aston Villa and the national team, have adopted a three/five just as many foreign clubs have turned to 4-4-2. Milan, Juventus, and now even the Netherlands, play that way. Germany, however, have a three/five.

Perhaps it is down to the players. Wenger again: "There is no perfect system. The best system is the one suited to the players you have. That is why some managers could be wrong in picking the system first – that can be done if you create your own team but when you arrive somewhere you have to adapt to the players.

"The right system is the one in which everybody in the team feels he can express his qualities."



ALEX FERGUSON'S TRADITIONAL LOOK: THE FLAT BACK-FOUR

Personnel

Gary Neville, David May, Gary Pallister and Denis Irwin are the first-choice quartet. Ronnie Johnsen, who will come in today if May's injury has not recovered, is the long-term replacement for Pallister and Phil Neville is being groomed to succeed Irwin.

Strengths

Provides good cover across the field with a clear demarcation of responsibility. Presses the opposition, good for offsides.

Weaknesses

Needs protective midfield, can be caught square, vulnerable to ball over the top.

Versatility

Limited. The Nevilles could play anywhere in either system but Pallister and May are much happier in a four.

Model goalkeeper is looking naked in the penalty area

David James (left) may have the 'yips' but with no credible replacement his place is safe. United have the experience of Raimond van der Gouw (right) to call upon. **Phil Shaw** reflects on the recent costly calamities of Liverpool's (and Armani's) No 1

When the Kop hailed him as "Armani's No 1", David James was playing so well that his secondary career on the catwalk was a cause for quips rather than qualms. A year on, with his catalogue of errors growing as thick as the Next Directory, he is more readily perceived as a goalkeeping model than a model goalkeeper.

It started up on Teesside and it will probably end in tears for Liverpool, if there is any repetition when Manchester United visit Anfield in today's potential Premiership decider. Early in January's game at Middlesbrough, James sent a clearance straight to Craig Hignett, who scored to send his former club on the way out of the Coca-Cola Cup.

The trickle turned into a torrent. Three horrendous gaffes at home to Newcastle – a misjudged dive, hesitation and a fatal foray into no-man's land, all in the last 20 minutes – nearly cost Liverpool a win that had appeared a formality.

Afterwards, James admitted spending eight hours in his house playing computer games prior to the match, leading to possible blurred vision. To think managers used to worry about players going out…

The following Saturday his fumble of a cross far from his line allowed Nottingham Forest to retrieve a point. The trait resurfaced in Norway, even though Liverpool beat SK Brann, and again, embarrassingly, when Coventry struck twice from corners for an unlikely away win.

James then gifted two goals to Paris St-Germain. Rumour had it he was standing for the Referendum Party; well, he was trying to take Liverpool out of Europe. And in Wednesday's derby at Everton, his habit of coming for crosses he has no hope of claiming provoked a sardonic "What's it like to catch the ball?" from both sets of supporters when he finally took one.

Bizarrely, in the middle of these weeks of living recklessly, James made his England debut against Mexico. Not since Stewart Kennedy let in five for Scotland in 1975 has Wembley seen a keeper wrap himself around the woodwork so often.

To many, James' hapless handling looks like a footballing equivalent of "the yips" in golf, where nerves wreak havoc with a player's putt. Others detect the opposite flaw, an over-confidence which makes him incapable of taking advice.

It is not mere fence-sitting to suggest the truth lies in between. At Goodison, after several near-calamitous moments which left Mark Wright looking as if he could have strangled him, James made a staggering save. There was nothing more certain than that he would come for and collect the resulting corner. Fired up, he did precisely that.

He may be James of the giant reach but his principal talent remains shot-stopping; he is arguably Britain's best when acting on instinct. Yet if judgement is called for – when he has time to think – he becomes Pat Jennings in reverse.

Nor, unlike David Seaman or Nigel Martyn, is he a phlegmatic, safety-first keeper. They exude presence much as Gordon Banks and Peter Shilton did. When a forward was through one-on-one against Shilton, they were confronted by an aura as much as by an individual. Even at 6ft 5in, James does not appear so imposing.

Part of the problem may stem from the fact that Liverpool do not have the back-up Steve Ogrizovic and Mike Hooper provided for Ray Clemence and Bruce Grobbelaar. The untested Tony Warner is James' theoretical deputy, while Roy Evans has also been able to call on a Dane, Jorgen Nielsen, since last month.

In spite of signs that the trust between James and his defenders is damaged, no one is advocating that either should take over like David Harvey did from Gary Sprake when Leeds were pursuing the "double" 25 years ago or as Les Sealey, on loan from Luton, did from Jim Leighton in Manchester United's FA Cup final replay line-up in 1990.

Today, Alex Ferguson may have to field Raimond van der Gouw, who came to United with a sound pedigree in Dutch football to succeed the experienced Tony Coton as Peter Schmeichel's understudy. Evans has no comparable alternatives.

While Schmeichel is far from infallible, as Derby demonstrated this month, he combines technique and presence, judgement and hatred of conceding a goal in measures his Anfield counterpart has yet to achieve on a consistent basis. Crucially, he can also shrug off a blunder in a way James seems unable to do.

Giorgio Armani described David James as "an extraordinary looking man". Were Anfield's No 1 to develop a temperament to complement his stature and reflexes, he could also become an extraordinary keeper. At 26 he still has time. Liverpool's needs are somewhat more pressing.

QUOTES OF THE WEEK

■ He reduced this golf course to nothing, **Jack Nicklaus** on Tiger Woods' Masters victory.

■ Tiger has never met anyone as mentally strong as himself and he never will. Woods' father, **Earl**.

■ I didn't realise Joyce was there. It was like a shadow going past. **Liz McColgan**, beaten by one second in the London Marathon by Joyce Chepchumba.

■ It makes you feel like they are conspiring against you. Liverpool were the worst. They saw it as their main chance. **Alex Ferguson**, Manchester United manager, suspecting a plot behind the Premier League's refusal to extend the season.

■ I told them all – the butlers, the chambermaids, everybody – to have the day off and go and watch the game. I even had to make my own lunch. **The Duke of Devonshire**, president of Chesterfield, on the FA Cup semi-final against Middlesbrough.

■ Are you watching, Mansfield? **Chesterfield's 23,000 fans** during the FA Cup semi-final.

MAJOR FIXTURES AND POOLS CHECK

TODAY
3.0 unless stated

FA Carling Premiership
1 Arsenal v Blackburn
– Aston Villa v Tottenham
2 Chelsea v Leicester
– Liverpool v Manchester Utd (11.15)
– Middlesbrough v Sunderland
3 Newcastle v Derby
4 Nottingham Forest v Leeds
5 Sheffield Wed v Wimbledon
– Southampton v Coventry
6 West Ham v Everton

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Man Utd	33	19	9	5	66	38	66
Liverpool	34	18	10	6	57	30	64
Arsenal	34	18	9	7	57	28	63
Newcastle	33	16	8	8	64	39	57
Aston Villa	34	16	8	10	43	30	56
Sheffield Wed	33	13	14	8	44	39	53
Wimbledon	33	13	10	10	44	40	49
Chelsea	34	13	10	11	53	53	49
Tottenham	34	12	6	16	40	46	42
Derby	34	10	12	12	41	51	42
Leeds	34	11	9	14	26	38	42
Everton	35	10	11	14	41	50	41
Leicester	33	10	10	13	38	47	40
Blackburn	33	8	13	12	35	35	37
Coventry	34	8	12	14	22	48	36
Southampton	34	8	10	16	45	53	34
West Ham	33	8	10	15	31	43	34
Sunderland	34	8	10	16	31	51	34
*Middlesbro	32	9	9	14	44	52	33
Nottm Forest	34	6	13	15	29	52	31

*Middlesbrough deducted three points

Nationwide Football League First Division
7 Bradford City v Birmingham
8 Charlton v Portsmouth
9 Crystal Palace v Barnsley
10 Grimsby v Reading
11 Huddersfield v West Bromwich
12 Manchester City v QPR
13 Oldham v Bolton
14 Oxford v Swindon
15 Tranmere v Sheffield Utd
16 Wolves v Southend

Second Division
– Brentford v Crewe
17 Burnley v Rotherham
– Bury v Peterborough
18 Chesterfield v Millwall
19 Gillingham v Blackpool
20 Luton v Shrewsbury
21 Plymouth v Walsall
– Preston v Stockport
22 Wrexham v Watford
23 Wycombe v Bournemouth
24 York v Bristol City

Third Division
25 Barnet v Cardiff
26 Cambridge Utd v Brighton
27 Chester v Scarborough
28 Darlington v Hartlepool
29 Doncaster v Fulham
30 Hereford v Torquay
31 Hull City v Leyton Orient
32 Lincoln City v Scunthorpe
33 Northampton v Exeter
34 Swansea v Mansfield

Bell's Scottish League Premier Division
35 Hearts v Dunfermline
36 Kilmarnock v Hibernian
37 Motherwell v Dundee Utd

First Division
38 Clydebank v Falkirk
39 Dundee v St Mirren
40 Morton v Airdrie
41 St Johnstone v East Fife
42 Stirling Albion v Partick Thistle

Second Division
43 Berwick v Hamilton
44 Clyde v Ayr
45 Livingston v Dumbarton
46 Stenhousemuir v Queen of South
47 Stranraer v Brechin

Third Division
– Albion Rovers v Arbroath
48 Cowdenbeath v Alloa
49 East Stirling v Inverness CT
– Montrose v Queen's Park
– Ross County v Forfar

TOMORROW

Auto Windscreens Shield Final
Carlisle Utd v Colchester Utd (1.30) (at Wembley Stadium)

Nationwide Football League First Division
Stoke v Port Vale (2.10)

Second Division
Bristol Rovers v Notts County (3.0)

Bell's Scottish League Premier Division
Celtic v Aberdeen (3.0)

TEAM SHEET

Arsenal v Blackburn
Last season: 0-0. Last five League matches: Arsenal WWLWW; Blackburn WLLDL
Arsenal captain Adams is again doubtful with an ankle injury, but midfielder Merson could start after a midweek reserve game. For Blackburn, Sutton (groin) has recovered, but full-back Le Saux, who no longer seems to feature in Rovers' plans, did not travel with the team to London yesterday.

Newcastle v Derby
Last season: No corresponding fixture. Last five League matches: Newcastle: WDDDW; Derby: LWWDW
Newcastle manager Dalglish will give striker Ferdinand (knee) a late fitness test. Winger Gillespie, who suffered minor concussion against Chelsea, should also return. Derby will still be without Croatian defender Stimac but Estonian goalkeeper Poom is available after a shoulder injury.

Aston Villa v Tottenham
Last season: 2-1. Last five League matches: Aston Villa: LDWWL; Tottenham: DLWLL
Villa goalkeeper Bosnich is still in the cold, after being fined for walking out of the Baseball Ground last week. Staunton (calf) is poised for a recall in place of Hughes. Spurs, who have been beset with injuries all season, could have Iversen (cartilage) and winger Fox (hamstring) missing.

Nottm Forest v Leeds
Last season: 2-1. Last five League matches: Nottingham Forest: DDDDL; Leeds: DLDDL
Forest's midfielder Haland is suspended but Pearce, Saunders and Cooper are fit. French winger Laurent and Scottish striker Lilley are poised to make full debuts for Leeds. Defenders Wetherall and Halle have recovered from injuries received in midweek, but striker Deane (ankle) is doubtful.

Chelsea v Leicester
Last season: No corresponding fixture. Last five League matches: Chelsea: WLLLL; Leicester: LDDDL
Chelsea player-coach Gullit is without the suspended Leboeuf and he may opt to rest Zola and play Mark Hughes and Vialli up front. Leicester goalkeeper Keller is absent on international duty and centre-back Elliott, crippled for the Coca-Cola Cup final replay, is in line for a recall.

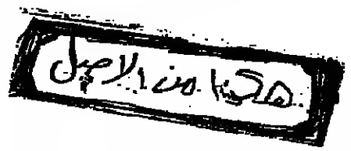
Sheff Wed v Wimbledon
Last season: 2-1. Last five League matches: Sheffield Wednesday: WLDWD; Wimbledon: LDDLW
Strikers Booth (ankle) and Hirst (Achilles) are injury doubts for Wednesday and centre-back Walker may also struggle to make the starting line-up. Striker Ekoku suffered a wrist injury in Wimbledon's 2-0 win over Leeds in midweek and is a doubtful starter for the Dons.

Liverpool v Man Utd
Last season: 2-0. Last five League matches: Liverpool: DWLWD; Manchester Utd: LWWLW
Collymore is poised to start up front with Fowler, who plays his last league game of the season for Liverpool before suspension. Cole and Solskjaer are available but United manager Ferguson hopes at least two of his injured quartet, Giggs, May, Schmeichel and Irwin, will make the line-up.

Southampton v Coventry
Last season: 1-0. Last five League matches: Southampton: LDWDW; Coventry: DLLWW
Southampton striker Le Tissier (hamstring) is working to be fit but Evans will continue in attack if the England player fails to recover. Coventry manager Strachan must decide whether to play himself or recall Dublin to the attack alongside Dublin. Goalkeeper Ogrizovic (thumb) is expecting to be fit.

Middlesbrough v Sunderland
Last season: No corresponding fixture. Last five League matches: Middlesbrough: WWWDD; Sunderland: LDDDL
Goalkeeper Schwarzer and full-back Fleming are ruled out for Middlesbrough, while Juninho (knee), Hignett (ankle) and Festa (neck) face late fitness tests. Sunderland manager Reid has strikers Rae and Quinn back after suspension and injury respectively in this potential relegation decider.

West Ham v Everton
Last season: 2-1. Last five League matches: West Ham: DDWDL; Everton: LLDWD
Ferdinand, Lomas and midfielder Moncur (suspension) are ruled out for West Ham. Breacker and captain Dicks are still missing. For Everton, Stuart is out with a neck injury after he fell awkwardly during the midweek defeat by Liverpool. Phelan (hamstring) and Thomsen (ankle) face late fitness tests.



هكذا من الأهل

If something deep inside you slackens so that to run your heart out no longer seems worth the effort, well, that's it...

Garry Nelson

"Strachan, Waddle, McGrath, Beardsley – these days, it seems players can on on for ever" is currently making a bid to be the most overused of football writers' stop-gaps. Overused and, very arguably, inaccurate. Although I might be minor league evidence for the endless Indian summer theory – 36 and still playing – I have strong doubts as to whether there are more old men out on the park these days than, say, when England woo the World Cup.

Thirty years ago there were approximately 5,000 registered professional footballers in the English game, twice as many as there are now. Sheer volume, therefore, was always enough to ensure that a *lucky handful survived* the physical perils of the park to reach a ripe old playing age.

Luck, good or bad, is always going to be the biggest factor determining a player's final games tally. As Dave Busst's career-ending injury last season most sickeningly reminded us, a split, leg-splitting, second, can end everything on the spot. But over the decades how many others have had to limp permanently off the field in early career, victims of Sod's Law? Tony Green, Brian Little, Gary Shaw, Jim Beglin, Danny Thomas, a few star names in a depressingly long list...

More weightily, though if less dramatically, for all such essentially crippled out of the game at one fell stroke, there have been countless talented pros who, sustaining a severe knock early on in their careers, routinely – "run it off, it'll be all right, son" – soldiered on never to regain absolute fitness again. Losing pace and place, slipping down the divisions, they sooner rather than later made their low-profiled bows to the inevitable. It's as true now, I'm sure, as it has ever been.

All the same, from those past eras (and setting aside the one-off case of goalkeepers – Jennings, Stepney, Ronnie Simpson, Shilton) a balancing list of "play 'til they got their pensions" names comes over even more readily to mind: Terry Paine, Jimmy Dickinson, Tommy Hutchison, Billy Bonds, Jim Langley, Tom Finney. Over-topping all, of course, in longevity, the incredible Stanley Matthews.

Position naturally impacts strongly on how long you last. Your average defender will stay longer than your average forward. (Matthews and Paine were wingers who didn't chase back. Work-rate in '66 was less punishing than a generation on). The point is made by the career of perhaps the finest post-war leader of England's forward line. After a long decade of service to Chelsea, Roy Bentley dropped back to centre-half and enjoyed the bonus of a few extended years with Fulham and Reading.

Today, of course, there are lots of artificial aids to playing longevity. Footwear is lighter, as is the lace-less ball; qualified physios are around a lot more; travel to away games is less wear and tearing; permitted body contact (charging the keeper; tackling from behind) is far more restricted. Above all, the introduction of the substitute has afforded many a grizzled veteran a sizeable helping of extra time: Andy Ritchie, Mark Hateley, Mick Harford, even, it has to be whispered, Garry Nelson.

At thirty-something, be it noted, the individual player's motivation is the starter for everything else. If you turn up for pre-season training and something deep inside you slackens so that the game of running your heart out in front of four thousand deriding fans no longer seems worth the effort, well, that's it. Good night, Rapid Vienna. It's worth stating – it's so obvious it gets overlooked – that players who keep on keeping on take enormous pride in what they're doing. They still enjoy it.

Not at all obvious is a political aspect of getting on in the game. Not a few 32-or-so year-olds, still with good performances to give, have found potential career-extending moves mysteriously coming to naught. The reason? They've been perceived as threats. Incumbent managers – the alleged officers of the game – have been known to balk at the prospect of senior NCOs, armed with a full FA coaching licence and 15 years shin-scarred experience on the park, signing for currently struggling City or United. Being too canny a football pro can positively reduce the life expectancy of a player, which the records of the Professional Footballers' Association show lasts, on average, an alarming eight seasons.

My wet finger in the air guess is that with television giving '90s football not only wall-to-wall but magnified exposure, the current crop of close to their sell-by date old boys are simply projected more into admass awareness than their predecessors. I don't think there are more of them. It just feels that way. Tell you what, let Peter Schmeichel pick a pack of over-35-years-olds from the current game and I'll pick one from the past to take it on. You know, his Brian McClair, my Frank Worthington. I bet my lot beat his 10-0.

Deflated Boro focus on survival

Football
GUY HODGSON

After Middlesbrough dragged themselves off the field on Wednesday night, the Coca-Cola Cup another dream destroyed, the first thing said as they reached the sad solitude of Hillsborough's dressing-room was "Forget it". One disappointment could not become too important.

Relegation to struggle against, an FA Cup semi-final replay, the season did not cease when Boro lost to Leicester in extra-time, it just made it more difficult. So much to play for, and such a visioo of failure grasped on the threshold of achievement. It makes today's *match against Sunderland, cup* matches notwithstanding, possibly the most important they have played in recent times.

Lose at The Riverside and relegation will become more than a possibility for either side. Add the ingredient of Wear-Tees rivalry and the tension today will be so strong as to be touchable.

"It's a massive game for us," Bryan Robson, the Middlesbrough manager, said. "We must lift ourselves for it."

The Sunderland manager, Peter Reid, also tapped the mood. "Bryan is a great mate of mine," he said, "and I was hoping they would win the final. Unfortunately it didn't happen and they will be up for this game. The players aod I know how hard it will be.

"We're not playing too badly, we've just forgotten how to win. We've been ahead of Nottingham Forest and Newcastle and had to settle for draws. The spirit is good, we just have to start winning."

It is a sentiment that will be repeated throughout the Premiership on a day when the relegation picture should become less muddied. Not only do Middlesbrough and Sunderland meet but the teams not far above them, Coventry and Southampton, clash at The Dell.

Arguably both have hit their best form of the season, as Southampton have taken eight points from their last four matches while Coventry have won their last two. Both could yet win their annual battle against relegation although defeat today for either, coupled with a decisive result at The Riverside and a win for West Ham against Everton, will plunge the losers into the bottom three.

"The players have done well recently," Graeme Souness, the Southampton manager, said, "*but that's all gone and forgotten*. We can't afford to relax and think we've done the hard part of the job. Good players put the last match behind them and immediately focus on the task ahead."

West Ham will again be without their inspirational leader, Julian Dicks, when they meet Everton, who appear to have made themselves safe with a draw against Liverpool in midweek. Dicks has a knee injury that will ensures he misses the next two matches and the manager, Harry Redknapp, must choose between Stan Lazaridis and Keith Rowland, both of whom have filled the gap in the last two games.

Nottingham Forest take on Leeds at the City Ground knowing that defeat will put them on the verge of a second relegation in four seasons. They are two points behind Boro having played two games more and three behind Sunderland, West Ham and Southampton. They would love to say "forget it" but that luxury has long since gone.

Newcastle's Steve Howey gets on his bike during training in Durham yesterday *Photograph: Empics*

Johnson doubt unsettles Celtic

SCOTTISH FOOTBALL

Celtic must beat Aberdeen at Parkhead tomorrow to ensure Rangers will not end the afternoon celebrating a ninth successive championship.

All Celtic can probably hope to do is make their Old Firm rivals, who do not play this weekend, wait to equal the record set by the Parkhead club under the late Jock Stein.

Celtic may without Tommy Johnson, their £2.4m acquisition from Astoo Villa, who is ooe of four players doubtful for the match. That is grim news for the Celts who, disregarding Tuesday's testimonial victory over Manchester United, have not won in five games.

If the Premier Division title is a waning ambition – for only the collection of three points will keep Celtic's slight hopes of overhauling Rangers alive – then Wednesday's Tennents Scottish Cup semi-final replay with First Division Falkirk offers a diversion. It is a temptation, however, they will have to resist, insists Celtic's assistant manager, Billy Stark.

"We've four league games left and a Cup semi-final replay and we want to end on a winning run," Stark said. "Players can't pick and choose games to play well and nor can you do that over 90 minutes in a game. It's not like a tap you can turn on and off. It might be human nature to be thinking about the Cup replay but that won't be tolerated here."

Johnson marked his debut with a goal against Falkirk last Saturday but is suffering from a slight hamstring strain. Injuries may also rule out Enrico Annoni, Jorge Cadete and Chris Hay. Peter Grant is suspended but Alan Stubbs is fit after the head injury sustained last week. Paul McStay has trained after his groin injury but will be a late decision.

With the title still to be decided – just – the relegation issue looms largest today. Kilmarnock and Hibernian meet at Rugby Park in a match vital to both clubs, with each being three points ahead of second-bottom Motherwell.

Kilmarnock, Scottish Cup semi-finalists and unbeaten in six games, will again be without their Scotland Under-21 international winger, Alex Burke, while their opponents have Chic Charnley suspended. Fellow midfielder Pat McGinlay is doubtful with an ankle injury, but central defender John Hughes could return line-up after a long-term back problem.

Motherwell play Dundee United at Fir Park knowing that nothing other than victory will do if Airdrie, who look certain to be First Division runners-up, are to be avoided in the play-off. United will secure a Uefa Cup place if they win.

In the First Division, St Johnstone can confirm both the championship and automatic promotion by beating relegated East Fife at McDiarmid Park, while Ayr United will step up from the Second if they take at least a point against Clyde at Broadwood.

At Dingwall in the Third, Ross County meet Forfar as they attempt to join Inverness Caledonian Thistle in climbing a division.

Hearts float, page 25

Briers signs for Warrington

Rugby League
DAVE HADFIELD

Warrington yesterday rushed through the signing of the teenage scrum-half, Lee Briers, in time for him to play against his old club, St Helens, tomorrow.

Club officials had to negotiate the traffic chaos in Leeds in order to register Briers at the Rugby League. He is seen as the answer to Warrington's problems in the position that began with the sacking of Willie Swann early this season and continued when the 16-year-old John Duffy broke his leg.

"I was a bit surprised when Saints agreed to let him go," said the Warrington chief executive, John Smith, of the 18-year-old Briers. "He showed a lot of potential in the games he played for them. Now we hope he will realise that potential with us. We have had a lot of injuries and off-loaded quite a few players, so we had one or two gaps and he will fill one of them."

Warrington have agreed to pay £65,000 for Briers, who performed admirably as a stand-in scrum-half and goal-kicker for Saints during Bobbie Goulding's six-match suspension at the start of the season.

"The decision to part with him was made with extreme reluctance, but we couldn't guarantee him first-team football," the Saints chief executive, David Howes, said.

First-team football is clearly what Briers wants. "I've had a taste of Super League rugby and I like it," he said. "Warrington are a progressive club and I have been impressed by them."

His new coach, Darryl Van de Velde, must decide whether to start with him after only a couple of hours' training with his new team-mates, or to leave Kelly Shelford in the starting line-up and introduce Briers from the bench. Saints are waiting for a fitness check on Paul Newlove before finalising their side.

The London Broncos' forward, Russell Bawden, has won his appeal against a three-match ban for a spear tackle. Bawden was placed on report for a tackle on Halifax's Michael Jackson last Sunday, but an appeal panel overturned the original suspension, saying that he was being given "the benefit of the doubt".

The Leeds prop, Barrie McDermott, is in line for a recall to their side to face Sheffield Eagles tomorrow night. McDermott has served a three-game ban for a high tackle in the semi-final defeat by Bradford and came safely through an Alliance match against Featherstone this week.

Krajicek's serve proves a winner

Tennis

Richard Krajicek conceded only nine points on his own serve in his 6-4, 6-3 win against David Prinosil in the quarter-finals of the Japan Open on Thursday.

The top seed, who served nine aces, said: "Any time I needed a big serve, I got it."

In the semi-final, Krajicek faces Patrick Rafter, the No 6 seed, who beat his fellow Australian, Todd Woodbridge, 6-4, 7-6.

Krajicek broke Prinosil in the first game of each set. On his own serve, he lost the first point and did not lose another until the first set's last game.

"If I keep playing like this, I think I have a very good chance of winning here," said Krajicek, the 1996 Wimbledon champion who is now ranked sixth in the world.

Prinosil said: "Today was very difficult, very windy. It's hard to play Richard if he *breaks you in the first game.*"

Sweden's Thomas Johansson, who oow has a 16-1 match record and two tournament titles since 10 March, beat Mark Woodforde, also of Australia, 6-3, 6-4. His semi-final opponent will be Liooel Roux, of France, who beat Boris Becker in the third round and then Martin Damm, of the Czech Republic, 6-3, 6-1 in the quarter-final.

The wind worsened for the Rafter-Woodbridge match when Rafter came back from 40-0 to break in the second set's first game and took a 2-0 lead. After a time out to fix one of the singles poles and chase down the ballboys' kneeling mats, blown away by the wind, he lost nine straight points and was even at 2-2. He broke again in the fifth game but was broken back in the 10th. In the tiebreak, he won four straight points from 3-3 on errors by Woodbridge.

The frustrations continued for Woodbridge and Woodforde, the world's top-ranked doubles pair when they lost their quarter-final 6-3, 6-7, 7-6 to Rafter and Justin Gimelstob.

America's Amy Frazier advanced to her fourth straight Japan Open women's final by overpowering Australia's Annabel Ellwood 6-2, 6-3. On Sunday *Frazier will meet the winner* of today's semi-final between Kimberly Po, of the United States, and Japan's Ai Sugiyama.

Frazier, the winner of the tournament in 1995, is a close friend of Po, her doubles partoer and frequent practice partner.

Brighton and Hove Albion: FAN'S EYE VIEW

I know you're tempted not to *read this* in case it's another whining Brighton fan, but I promise not to rant on and on about Bill Archer or ground-shares at Gillingham. I know compassion fatigue has set in.

Next weekend Brighton and Hove Albion bid farewell to the Goldstone Ground after nearly 100 years. Time to put aside the mess of the present and get nostalgic about the past.

Leaving a ground is a strange time. Try explaining the emotion you feel to a non-football person and you come across as, well, pretty stupid. The Goldstone is crumbling, but we'll still miss its quirks and treasure its memories. The way the east terrace shrinks from over 100 steps to just one as it runs the length of the pitch. The west stand that stops three-quarters of the way up the other side.

People are swapping their favourite stories. Remember the rainy Saturday we put five past Charlton in the first half alone? The epic Cup wins over Liverpool in the 80s, and the run to Wembley in 1983? Or Peter Ward's England Under-21 game – a hat-trick against Norway on his home turf?

And, more recently, reaching the 1991 play-offs with a last-minute winner against Ipswich, and then putting four past Millwall in 20 glorious minutes to go on to Wembley.

Someone asked me if I recalled the middle-aged woman who used to stand by the floodlight tower in the north-east corner, clutching a teddy bear decked in blue and white and screaming non-stop for 90 minutes. I don't – it was 25 years ago and I'm too young – but the way such images and sounds can stay with people for years speaks volumes about the special meaning a ground has for them.

Even this troubled and still unresolved season has given us another moment to cherish: 8 February 1997, Fans United. Supporters from clubs all over Europe came to the Goldstone and saw Brighton win 5-0: a day for football as a community, a day for the power and passion of fans against the perils that threaten the cash-strapped lower divisions. The sight of scarves and flags from over 50 clubs held aloft together was unforgettable. It summed up the feeling of family that a club and its ground can engender.

Like many others, I've grown to care about Brighton more than ever these past two years. The way the supporters have pulled together has been staggering and, when I stand in my usual terrace spot for the final time, it will be hard not to shed a tear.

Next season I could be one of hundreds, not thousands. Next season it could be Stalybridge Celtic and Rushden & Diamonds. Next season "home" could be more than 100 miles from the Goldstone, but I'll still go.

It's fitting that, in our last season there, the Goldstone is the fortress it used to be. Since Steve Gritt became manager we're unbeaten at home, with 10 wins and two draws.

After the pitch invasion last April, which, at the time, we feared was our last Goldstone game, fans prised pieces of turf and carried them home. I put mine in my parents' front garden, but it withered and died.

A metaphor for the club? It so nearly has been, but now I don't think so. The players care, the fans care and, if we've proved anything during this year of strife, it is that our football club won't wither and die.

Next Saturday I'll take a trowel and carry off a decent wedge of Goldstone grass. This time I'll replant it with care and look after it properly, so that it grows and prospers. Now, Mr Archer, wouldn't *that* be a fitting metaphor for the Albion's future?

SPORTING DIGEST

Parnevik Ryder Cup warning

Golf

The Swede Jesper Parnevik will not be eligible for an automatic place in Europe's Ryder Cup team in September after declining to rejoin the European Tour.

Ken Schofield, the European Tour's executive director, said yesterday that Parnevik's decision to compete solely on the US Tour restricted his chances of making the European team for the Cup in Valderrama.

Schofield added that the Swedish player's only chance rested with the Ryder Cup captain, Seve Ballesteros, who could issue two wild-card places in the team.

Speaking at the Cannes Open, Schofield said: "The reality now is that the only way Jesper will get into the Ryder Cup team is by way of one of the two wild cards. And, of course, they are at Seve's behest." Parnevik, 32, was runner-up at the Open in 1994 and is presently fourth on the US money-winners' list.

Meanwhile in the second *round* at Cannes, Paul Eales shot a six-under-par 65, the best of the week, to move to within one shot of the early lead during a sunny but windy second round. The 33-year-old Preston player's round included four birdie twos, while the leader, Santiago Luna, of Spain, produced a fine 66 for a total of 136.

Eales was delighted, for it was not only his best *round on the* European Tour this year but the first time he had had four twos on his card in such an important event.

Australian rules

AFL: Western Bulldogs 13.11 (89) bt Melbourne 13.9 (87).

Baseball

AMERICAN LEAGUE: Toronto 5 Oakland 4; Seattle 2 Detroit 8; Minnesota 4 Anaheim 3 (10 innings); Milwaukee 5 New York Yankees 4; Cleveland 4 Boston 3; Texas 5 Kansas City 1; Baltimore 1 Chicago White Sox 0.
NATIONAL LEAGUE: Florida 2 St Louis 1; Pittsburgh 5 Cincinnati 2.

Basketball

NBA: Seattle 108 Denver 104; Utah 106 Golden State 93; Portland 105 Vancouver 73; LA Lakers 108 Sacramento 99.

Bowls

WOMEN'S WORLD INDOOR SINGLES CHAMPIONSHIP (Llanelli) Section A: S Hazell (Eng) bt K Horman (Jer) 7-6 7-5; A Sutherland (Wal) bt P Nolan (Rep of Irl) 7-0 7-6. Section B: M Castle (NZ) bt J Lowery (Jer) 7-1 4-7 7-6; C McAllister (Scot) bt M Wilkinson (Rep of Irl) 7-4 6-7 7-5. Section C: N Shaw (Eng) bt R Forrest (Can) 7-1 4-7 7-0; E McGarvie (Sco) bt A Simon (Guer) 7-4 6-7 7-2. Section D: J Roylance (Eng) bt A Mernon (Guer) 7-6 7-0; Lai Suk Man (HK) bt L Evans (Wal) 7-4 6-7 7-4.

Boxing

Chris Eubank, the former world super-middleweight champion, escaped a jail sentence yesterday after a fireworks display he had organised exploded and caused serious facial injuries to two women. Eubank was ordered to do 200 hours community service.

Football

NORTHERN IRELAND SQUAD (World Cup qualifier v Armenia, Yerevan, 30 April): Wright (Manchester City), Fettis (Nottingham Forest); Patterson (Luton), Hill (Leicester), Lennon (West Ham), Lennon (Leicester), Quinn (Blackpool), Horlock (Manchester City), Nolan (Sheffield Wednesday), McCarthy (Port Vale), Jenkins (Chester), Worthington (Stoke), McMahon (Stoke), Magilton (Southampton), Morrow (Queen's Park Rangers), Taggart (Bolton), Dowie (West Ham), Hughes (West Ham), Griffin (St Johnstone), Mulryne (Manchester Utd).
THURSDAY'S LATE RESULTS: Icis League Premier Division: Dagenham & Redbridge 1 Hitchin 1. Second Division: Collier Row & Romford 3 Chalfont St Peter 0; Wivenhoe 2 Banstead 5. Winstonlead Kent League: Furness 2 Folkestone Invicta 0. Unibond League First Division: Ashton Utd 4 Gretna 2. Unijet Sussex County First Division: Oakwood 1 Saltdean 0; Shoreham 0 Wick 0. Pontins League Premier Division: Bolton 0 Liverpool 3. First Division: Leicester 3 Aston Villa 2. Second Division: Stockport 2 Rotherham 0; Grimsby 2 Manchester City 2. League Cup semi-final: Stoke 3 Walsall 2. FA Youth Cup Semi-final second leg: Blackburn Rovers 2 Crystal Palace 2 (agg: 3-4). Spanish League: Oviedo 1 (Iglesias 32) Racing Santander 5 (Beschastnykh 17, Zalazar 38, Merino 49, Correa 86, 88); Espanyol 0 Atletico Madrid 0. French League: Lille 1 (Becanovic 69) Cannes 2 (Daury 41; Charvet 87). Dutch Cup Semi-final: Heerenveen 8 Helmond Sport 0.

Golf

CANNES OPEN (Royal Mougins Golf Club, Fr) Early leading second-round scores (GB or Irl unless stated): 136 S Luna (Sp) 70 66. 137 P Eales 72 65. 138 P Broadhurst 68 70. 139 T Bjorn (Den) 71 68; S Scahill (NZ) 67 72. 140 S Bottomley 70 70; P McGinley 72 68; N Briggs 71 69. 141 F Valera (Sp) 72 69; D Smyth 72 69; A Coltart 71 70; R Muntz (Neth) 68 73; N Fasth (Swe) 73 68. 142 M Gronberg (Swe) 71 71; C Whiteley (SA) 71 71; R McFarlane 70 72; D Carter 68 74. 143 P Walton 70 73; A Sherborne 69 74; M Jonzon (Swe) 72 71; D Cooper 73 70; P Mitchell 73 70. 144 D Westermark (Swe) 71 73; P Sjoland (Swe) 72 72; B Lane 75 69; P Curry 72 72; M Lanner (Swe) 72 72; D Howell 72 72; P Fulke (Swe) 74 70; R Rafferty 74 70; R Russell 72 72; M-A Martin (Sp) 71 73. 145 M Davis 72 73; A Mednick (Swe) 75 70; M Mouland 73 72; H Clark 70 75; K Tomori (Japan) 76 69. 146 D Gilford 79 67; F Tarnaud (Fr) 73 73; J Haeggman (Swe) 83 63; J Spence 74 72; M Desbove (Fr) 74 72; A Canete (Arg) 71 75; K Eriksson (Swe) 75 71; R Jacquelin (Fr) 69 77; J Van de Velde (Fr) 74 72. 147 D Edlund (Swe) 77 70; T Levet (Fr) 74 73; R Goosen (SA) 74 73; I Garrido (Sp) 75 72; W Bennett 78 69. Ret: M Farry (Fr). *denotes amateur
HERITAGE CLASSIC (Hilton Head Island, S Carolina) Leading first-round scores (US unless stated): 66 N Price (Zim); 66 T Lehman, R Fehr, B Faxon; 67 L Clements, H Sutton; 68 J Maginnes, J Leonard, P Mickelson, F Funk, T Watson, O Browne, C Stadler; 69 B Glasson, S Stricker, J Wilson, J D Blake; 70 B Appleby (Aus), J Sindelar, B Fabel, S Hoch, D Pooley, D A Weibring, D Love, N Henke, W Levi. Selected: 71 C Montgomerie (GB), F Allem (SA), V Singh (Fiji). 72 J Parnevik (Swe); 73 F Nobilo (NZ), R Allenby (Aus); 74 W Grady (Aus), N Faldo (GB), E Els (SA), D Frost (SA); 76 G Waite (NZ); 79 S Lyle (GB).
SUSAN G KOMEN LPGA INTERNATIONAL (Marsh Inlet, South Carolina; par 36-36-72) Leading first-round scores (US unless stated): 65 N Bowen 32 33. 66 N Harvey 34 32; L Kiggens 34 32. 69 S Steinhauer 33 35; L Davies 33 35; T Barrett 33 35; A Sorenstam 34 34; M Hirase 35 33; L Hackney 32 36; 69 M Will Halpin 34 35; P Sheehan 33 36; M McGann 34 35; C Johnston Forbes 34 35; C Figg Currier 34 35; H Drew 34 35; B Burton 34 35; C H Koch 35 34; H Alfredsson 34 35; *T Faucette 34 35. *denotes amateur

Hockey

WOMEN'S FOUR NATIONS (Cardiff): Wales 11 Slovakia 0; Ireland 11 Poland 0.
WOMEN'S INTER LEAGUE PLAY-OFFS (Milton Keynes) First Day: Colwall 3 Tulse Hill 2; Poynton 0 Aldridge 0.

Ice hockey

NHL Stanley Cup Play-offs: New Jersey 5 Montreal 2 (*New Jersey lead best-of-seven series 1-0*); Buffalo 3 Ottawa 1 (*Buffalo lead 1-0*); Philadelphia 5 Pittsburgh 1 (*Philadelphia lead 1-0*); Florida 3 New York 0 (*Florida lead 1-0*).

Motorcycling

JAPANESE 500CC GRAND PRIX (Suzuka) Practice times: 1 M Doohan (Aus) Honda 2min 12.908sec; 3 N Fujiwara (Japan) Yamaha 2:14.746; 3 T Aoki (Japan) Honda 2:14.788; 4 A Barros (Br) Honda 2:15.108; 5 R Laconi (Fr) Honda 2.15.852.

Motor racing

Lola, the Formula One team who had to withdraw from last month's Brazilian Grand Prix because of their financial position, have until 28 April to find a buyer and avoid liquidation.

Rugby Union

François Pienaar, South Africa's World Cup-winning captain, yesterday took on extra authority at Saracens, who confirmed him as their player-coach in charge of the first team.

ACT Brumbies returned to the top of the Super 12 standings yesterday with a hard fought 15-9 win over the Otago Highlanders in Invercargill.

Speedway

THURSDAY'S LATE RESULTS: Premier League Cup: Sheffield 60 Berwick 30. Elite League: Ipswich 57 Wolverhampton 33.

Swimming

WORLD SHORT-COURSE CHAMPIONSHIPS (Gothenburg, Swe, Thurs): Men: 100m Breaststroke: 1 P Isaksson (Swe) 59.99; 2 S Lopukhov (Rus) 1:00.05; 3 J Kuppe (Ger) 1:00.18; 4 R Maden (GB) 1:00.32. 400m individual medley: 1 M Dunn (Aus) 4:06.89 (*championship record*); 2 Xie Xufeng (Ch) 4:12.52; 3= C Keller (Ger), R Kamaugh (US) 4:12.53. 4x100m medley relay: 1 Australia 3:30.86 (*world record*); 2 Russia 3:32.56; 3 GB 3:32.81. Women: 50m freestyle: 1 S Volker (Ger) 24.70sec; 2 J Thompson (US) 24.78; 3 Le Jingyi (China) 24.83; 6 S Rolph (GB) 25.41. 100m freestyle: 1 J Thompson (US) 53.48; 2 S Volker (Ger) 53.50; 3 Le Jingyi (China) 53.72; 6 B Rolph (GB) 54.13. B final: 7 C Huddart (GB) 56.19. 400m individual medley: 1 E Johnson (Aus) 4:35.18; 2 S Hase (Ger) 4:36.02; 3 J Meier (Can) 4:37.46. 4x200m freestyle relay: 1 China 7:51.92 (*world record*); 3 Sweden 7:56.04; 3 Australia 7:56.12; 9 GB 7:59.18.

Table tennis

COMMONWEALTH CHAMPIONSHIPS (Glasgow) Men's team final: England bt India 4-1 (Eng names first): A Cooke bt A Dutta 21-19 21-8; M Syed bt C Baboor 21-18 21-16; A Perry bt A Basak 21-14 21-16; Cooke and Perry lost to Baboor and Basak 21-23 15-21; Cooke bt Baboor 21-13 21-15). Final standings: 1 England; 2 India; 3 Canada; 4 Australia; 5 New Zealand; 6 Malaysia; 7 Northern Ireland; 8 Singapore; 9 Wales; 10 Scotland; 11 Barbados; 12 Mauritius; 13 Cyprus; 14 South Africa. Women's team final: Singapore bt England 4-2 (Sing names first): Pavy Fern Tan bt A Holt 23-21 21-19; Jing Jun Hong bt L Lomas 21-18 23-21; Li Ping Koh lost to N Deaton 18-21 12-21; Jing and Tan bt Lomas and Holt 14-21 21-11 21-12; Tan lost to Lomas 15-21 26-24 8-21; Jing bt Deaton 21-10 21-10). Final standings: 1 Singapore; 2 England; 3 Australia; 4 Malaysia; 5 Canada; 6 India; 7 Wales; 8 Northern Ireland; 9 Scotland; 10 South Africa; 11 New Zealand; 12 Barbados.

Tennis

Spain's Albert Costa will move into the world top 10 rankings for the first time next week after yesterday reaching the semi-finals of the Barcelona Open with a comprehensive 6-4, 6-2, win over Cedric Pioline, of France.

BARCELONA OPEN Men's singles, quarter-finals: A Costa (Sp) bt C Pioline (Fr) 6-4 6-2; C Moya (Sp) bt A Medvedev (Ukr) 6-4 6-2
JAPAN OPEN (Tokyo) Men's singles, fourth round: R Krajicek (Neth) bt D Prinosil (Ger) 6-4 6-3; P Rafter (Aus) bt T Woodbridge (Aus) 6-4 7-6; T Johansson (Swe) bt M Woodforde (Aus) 6-3 6-4; L Roux (Fr) bt M Damm (Cz Rep) 6-3 6-1. Women's singles, semi-final: A Frazier (US) bt A Ellwood (Aus) 6-2 6-3.

Evans v Ferguson
The tactical battle for supremacy, page 30

sport

The right frame of mind
Peter Ebdon's challenge for snooker's world championship, page 28

Early decider in Premiership race

Football
GUY HODGSON

The date has stuck out in the congested Premiership fixture list for months. Liverpool versus Manchester United. The requirements of satellite television have even intervened to ensure it will take place with high noon at its fulcrum.

Win and United will be confident of gaining their fourth championship in five seasons. Lose and they will still be best placed, although Liverpool and Arsenal will have renewed hope. The title is never taken or squandered in one match, it will just seem like it today.

"It's a massive game for both of us," Ferguson, United's manager, said, while Roy Evans, his Liverpool counterpart, added: "If we don't win it'll be a kick in the teeth." He went on to say his side could be defeated and still win the championship, although few would concur.

Reliable Liverpool are not. Brilliant frequently, predictable hardly ever. They might have won the title the last two seasons and yet appear likely to finish empty handed. Even the Champions' League place for the runners-up position has been jeopardised by their failings and Arsenal's dogged persistence.

Wednesday was a perfect illustration. They should have beaten Everton but drew 1-1 and had Robbie Fowler sent off. Ferguson left Goodison early with a broad smile that no doubt grew when his car radio revealed that Liverpool had lost, after today, their most important player for the rest of the season.

Dependability was the theme of the United manager's prematch thoughts yesterday, a quality, he said, had been forged by familiarity with these high-altitude affairs. Trips to Juventus and Porto come to mind this season, a failure and a success, although he would argue just the experience of being in these places is a plus.

"Some clubs find themselves in a situation like this," he said, "and it's all new to them, but it's nothing fresh for Manchester United. The players have proved themselves many times in situations like the one they'll face at Anfield. I trust my players, it's a case of letting them get on with it. They've got responsibilities and they'll carry them out.

"They've got ability and they can handle hostile atmospheres. Elland Road is just the same as Anfield in that respect and we did well there earlier this season, winning 4-0."

Last time these two teams met at Anfield, in December 1995, Liverpool won 2-0 and should have scored far more. That day United's central midfield consisted of Brian McClair and Lee Sharpe, a soft centre that had been replaced by Roy Keane and Nicky Butt in the FA Cup final.

United's 1-0 win at Wembley was crowned by Eric Cantona's goal but carved out by the strength and running of Butt and Keane who overwhelmed John Barnes and Jamie Redknapp, forcing them to attempt their passes from too deep. If Andy Cole had a shred of confidence then the match would have been over as a contest in the first 20 minutes.

"Butt has come back from injury and has been fantastic," Ferguson said of the England midfielder. "When others are tiring he's flying all over the place." As for Keane, he added: "He can handle 60 games a season no bother. It's like signing a fresh player every year."

If Liverpool can confine Butt and Keane without exhausting themselves, then they have ample ability to prevail today. Their problem is that they tend to tire in matches, their second-half performances rarely matching their first. It is why teams like Newcastle have come back at them and why Coventry stole three points in their last game at Anfield.

In Liverpool's favour they have a full squad to choose from which means Evans' dilemma – apart from David James' dreadful lack of confidence – will be whether to play Rob Jones at right wing-back for his defensive assuredness or Jason McAteer for his runs and crosses. Given the need to win today, McAteer will probably be chosen.

As for United, they will select their team once fitness tests have been undertaken on Peter Schmeichel, Denis Irwin, David May and Ryan Giggs. "The team were superb against Blackburn," Ferguson said. "Anyone fit on top of that will be bonus."

So will any lead after today's match. A United win and the strain of four games in nine days at the season's climax, which the Football Association confirmed yesterday, will diminish.

PFA puts pressure on Jones over writ

ALAN NIXON

Gordon Taylor, the chief executive of the Professional Footballers' Association, yesterday attempted to persuade Vinnie Jones to drop his legal battle with Wimbledon and the Premier League.

Taylor has written to the Wimbledon midfielder asking him to reconsider his attempt to win a free transfer through the courts.

Jones has issued a writ for restraint of trade over his demand to be able to move to another English club for nothing. He argues that the Bosman ruling, which means out of contract players can move on free transfers across European Union boundaries, should also apply to domestic transfers.

Taylor, however, pointed out to the 32-year-old Wimbledon captain that his action would ruin plans to bring in a new transfer system next year.

The PFA – along with the Football Association and the Premier League – are bringing in a rule that scraps fees for any player over 24 and out of contract as of the summer of 1998.

If Jones wins his legal action, then the whole transfer system will change, which Taylor fears could force some clubs to close with the loss of players' jobs.

Blackburn Rovers left for Highbury yesterday without Graeme Le Saux. The left-back, who wants a transfer, has not been at his best in recent games and the decision to omit him from Rovers' vital game at Arsenal could have repercussions when Glenn Hoddle selects his England team for the World Cup match with Georgia later this month.

Neil Warnock should know by tomorrow whether he has a future as the manager of Oldham Athletic. A board meeting is being held over the weekend to discuss whether to ask him to carry on beyood the end of the seasoo. Speculation is rife that Joe Royle could return to the club which he served so successfully until quitting to take over at Everton.

Brighton's long-term survival plans will be announced next Tuesday after n meeting at the FA yesterday worked out final details between the club's owner, Bill Archer, and a consortium led by Dick Knight.

In Monday's 20-page sports section

'Given the choice I'd much rather sign up Scottish players, but tell me where they are. If I stick to just home-grown talent, for the good of Scottish football, we probably wouldn't even win domestic honours, let alone get anywhere in Europe'

As Rangers stand on the brink of a ninth consecutive Scottish title, their manager **Walter Smith** tells Ian Stafford why he will continue to invest in foreign talent

Plus

Glenn Moore on today's Premiership match of the season at Anfield

That Was The Weekend That Was, our alternative guide to the weekend football programme

Chris Hewett on rugby union

Derek Pringle on cricket

Sports Book of the Week

Sports betting

Jason Gallian (left) and Mark Butcher pile up the runs for England A yesterday as the Rest's Alex Tudor shows signs of suffering Photograph: David Ashdown

Butcher emerges from unusual day with credit

Cricket
DEREK PRINGLE reports from Edgbaston
England A 272-2 v The Rest

This was more a two-blanket occasion than a curtain-raiser as April revealed its schizophrenic nature to all those who had left that extra sweater at home. The pitch was scarcely less two-faced either and Mark Ramprakash, having won the toss and inserted England A on what looked to be a greentop, watched aghast as his bowlers conceded 237 runs before taking their first wicket.

In truth, it was not really bowling weather and this was not the terror track England crumbled upon against the West Indies two years ago. But then the Rest's bowlers, for all their potential, are not Ambrose and co, a fact that Mark Butcher and Jason Gallian both appeared to notice as a brace of hundreds were rattled up by mid-afternoon.

Quite what the selectorial trio present were meant to make of this is uncertain, as testing deliveries, nearly all of them bowled by the gangling Alex Tudor, could be counted on one mittened hand. When bad light eventually ended play an hour and a half early, it was the fielding side who looked the more relieved.

Apart from Chris Silverwood, whose line and length did not manage to betray a winter spent on tour with England, the Rest's attack contained three bowlers – Tudor, Dean Cosker and Ben Hollioake – with 13 first-class appearances between them. Mind you, Simon Brown betrayed his superior experience by bowling dross, the lack of swing upsetting his normally aggressive line.

Of the centurions, Butcher looked the more assured and probably has more to play for than Gallian, who has already had an unconvincing stint at the top, although a broken finger limited his appearances on this winter's England A tour of Australia. His opening partner, Butcher, ended that trip as leading scorer, scoring fifties in seven of his 11 innings.

Having begun life as a bowling all-rounder, Butcher, now 24, began to move up the order after injuring his pelvis two seasons ago. These days he is happy to accumulate runs rather than maidens, and with Nick Knight returning from New Zealand with both a smashed finger and a question mark over his suitability as an opener, an early run glut from the Surrey man may well catch the selectorial eye.

Unlike Knight, whose sense of urgency exposes his frailty outside off-stump, Butcher looks unhurried, preferring to get off-side of the ball and tuck it away to leg. Defensively he looks sound, and apart from a few fresh air drives against his county colleague Tudor, his front foot shots were as crisp and crunchy as newly shredded coleslaw.

His back foot shots, too, were scarcely less than certain and he took the junior Hollioake, Ben, down a peg by hoisting him high over mid-wicket into the vast empty quarter of yellow seats. With only 200 spectators braving the Birmingham murk, it hardly felt like a match billed as the modern eqivalent to the old Test trials of the Sixties.

Silverwood fed Gallian's cut shot for most of the morning, but his persistence paid fortunate dividends when the Lancashire player cut another straight to Hollioake in the gully.

But if that success was scarcely deserved, the wicket of Michael Vaughan, whose off-stump was knocked back by Tudor, was just reward for a game effort. Tudor, another of the Surrey stable to have suffered recent injury, was one of the stars of the England Under-19s' tour of Pakistan. With Brendon Julian unavailable at the Oval this season, he will get his opportunities. And on days when the mercury climbs, his wickets too.

■ Merv Kitchen, George Sharp, David Shepherd and Peter Willey, England's four representatives on the international panel, have been appointed as umpires for this summer's Ashes Test series.

Germans angered by Uefa

The president of the German football federation snubbed an official dinner at Uefa's meeting in Geneva yesterday in protest at the failure of the European game's governing body to give its backing to a single bid from the continent to host the 2006 World Cup finals.

Egidius Braun said he had backed England's campaign for the 1996 European championships, in return for a "gentlemen's agreement" with England to give their support to Germany for the World Cup 10 years after. "I am more than disappointed in the English," he said.

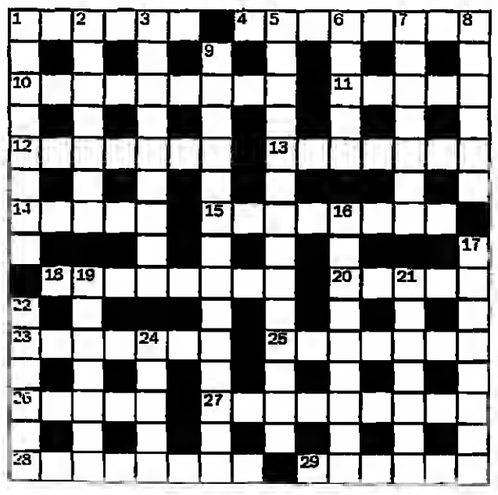
The Football Association claims to have no knowledge of such an agreement, news of which apparently was not passed on to them by their former president, Sir Bert Millichip.

Franz Beckenbauer, the former captain and later coach of Germany, who was in Geneva as a special ambassador backing the German bid, was also angry at Uefa's stance, saying that if he met with the president of either Uefa or Fifa, the world game's governing body, "there would have been a decision."

Europe's eight votes within Fifa, which has 24 members, could be split between England and Germany, weakening the Europeans' chances of beating Brazil or South Africa.

THE INDEPENDENT CROSSWORD

No 3277. Saturday 19 April — By Spurius



ACROSS

1 Good luck charm on old lady's bed (6)
4 GP has little hesitation approaching hospital department for record (8)
10 New family member given CD – it helps with development (9)
11 Pan is of recent manufacture (5)
12 Bent cop able to identify fake drug (7)
13 Went round gallery, taken in by fisherman (7)
14 Almost time for retirement? (5)
15 Coming to Sydney next time, sport? (8)
18 Film location not open to the public (2,6)
20 Religious leader in Rhode Island entertaining a couple of bishops (5)
23 Cosmetic Mum's used to cover a blemish (7)
25 Square measure incorrectly given by teacher (7)
26 Clever commercial finished in record time (5)
27 One given clean-out after surgery to guard against disease (9)
28 To begin with, those insisting on coming in late must be quiet (8)
29 Ensemble's former violinist at last recruited by group (6)

DOWN

1 Like many a youth girl has shut up? (8)
2 Old queen's place, no good for affair? (7)
3 Band, in gold, on coffer artist depicted (9)
5 Description of habit when reasonably well controlled? (7,7)
6 Anxious to have selected group of candidates putting up (5)
7 Typical of the reaction you get in spring? (7)
8 Smart attempt to pocket object (6)
9 Short cut to recovery? (5,9)
16 Device for holding a dropper making little impact? (9)
17 Lieutenant cherishing unjustified belief in safety device (8)
19 New stance perhaps just being developed (7)
21 Offensively obtrusive article in newspaper (7)
22 Damage produced by one appearance in which politician's involved (6)
24 Conservative floored by opponent's trick (5)

Friday's solution

Last Saturday's solution

The first five correct solutions to this week's puzzle opened next Thursday receive hardbacked copies of the new Oxford Dictionary of Quotations. Answers and winners' names will be published next Saturday. Send solutions to Saturday Crossword, P. O. Box 4013, The Independent, 1 Canada Square, Canary Wharf, London E14 5DL. Please use the box number and postcode and give your own postcode. Last week's winners: R Gould, Winscombe; C Claflin, York; M Grosvenor, Shipley; G Turner, Formby; C Farmer, Tunbridge Wells.

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هكذا من الأصل

هكذا من الأصل

IMAGE OF THE WEEK The temptation to suggest that rather a lot of Conservative candidates need all the help they can get is irresistible, though they probably didn't expect any helpful suggestions from the local constabulary, such as this one did in Stansted, Essex. Photograph by Brian Harris with 160 ASA colour negative film, 500th second at f5.6, 18mm lens. To order a copy of this picture – for £14 – phone 0171-293 2534

thelongweekend

Okay, it is the 24th of January. This begins to feel a bit like a travel diary. I suppose it is. I've hit very bad weather. I retired after compline last night, with rising panic. I don't know why I agreed to come in here for so long – three days is ample – and I feel I need the sense that I'm going to get out soon, a feeling of the arc of the thing, as ao end in sight.

So I'm playing mind games with myself that once the third day is over, that's nearly a quarter of it – of course it isn't. This is to do with belief. If I could feel that I was able to pray, really able io pray for something or to someone, I'd be fine.

I've just come back from recreation and vespers. Recreation – I sat oext to a lovely oun called Mother Philip Howard who leads the singing. I asked her whether they have any oews.

They have oo television, but they are allowed a sort of weekly *Guardian*, and they also get the *Catholic Herald*, she says, which has a great lot of oews in it. They don't have any other oews, unless something enormous happens in the world. I said, like a bomh? She said, well no, but if the Pope died.

They were allowed to listen to the radio for the Royal Wedding and that was the last time they sat in the garden and listeoed to the radio communally, they were given a special dispensation. So I'm going down for another half hour kneeling and adoration – goodness me, I wish I koew how to do the adoratioo business. Signing off oow.

It's Thursday night. Today in choir an odd thing happened. We were singing sext, I think, and one of the nuns had to begin the singing, start a lioe oo her own, and she burst into tears. So I decided she was having a very bad veil day.

Later on at supper, I was looking at the table as we most of us were, and the oext thing she got up and knelt because there's been a positive epidemic of this kneeling in the middle of supper or in the middle of lunch. And it's this punishment exercise where, I think, if they feel they've had a bad thought, then they must rise, come to the centre of the refectory, kneel in front of Mother General's table – a sort of high table underneath the crucifix – and they kneel in the middle of the floor and declare, as it were, that they had absolotely committed some frightful sin. Of course, all one does is spend one's time surmising what the thought was.

These oums wear a wedding ring on their wedding finger but on their right hand, because they are brides of Christ. This hijacking of the language of love and passion is all very well and good in relation to love and God, but the metaphor can't suddenly stop at the sort of happy families picture of the bride and bridegroom sitting in their thrones looking down at a happy company.

To be in love with Christ is to be open to him, physically, is to be sexually involved. It's ooe of the main experiences of falling in love, is a heightened sexual awareness of the other. And I suppose my experience here has been the totality of the absence of the word sex or sexuality. Why is it the thing that most threatens? You don't see any other flesh, ever. You just see these beautiful, beautiful cowls moving along the ground. I get awkward talking about their sexual behaviour because I don't want to presume on it.

For all I know, when I leave on Wednesday, there's a big orgy and they have all the priests round – I douht that. I doo't know what you'd do if you had a sexual problem here. I was going upstairs last night and I passed a workman leaving and I went out and I said, do you want to go out? And he said, yes. And I found myself saying, I would give anything to come with you. And he got the fright of his life. I suppose he thought I was a permanent postulant and he had suddenly potentially seduced me away.

Good morning, it's Friday. Am I admitting that this place is working its magic on me? What it is doing is the thing that I do most admire about the theatre or music – somewhere there's a point at which it just bypasses the intellect and becomes an emotional experience.

As soon as it's emotional, of course, one can find the energy behind it, because people don't function from the intellect, neither in nor out of a convent, so I don't think it's logic that makes any of us live the crazed lives we lead or the overworked lives we lead. It's emotion. It's usually for the love of somebody or something. And this love of Christ is their gift, because they understaod what it is to love something that you can't see, feel, touch or smell.

I had a marvellous time kneeling down in front of the crucifix in my half an hour of adoration. I must say I did find that I was doing it in a different way. I was neither daydreaming nor reacting. I was just asking questions and acknowledging that I was asking questions in relation to that crucifix, I'll give you that. I also found it not unpleasant for the first time. Maybe my knees had got used to it.

It's my last day. I know I'm coming to the end and there's so much I want to say now, because I am suddenly seeing it from the top of a mountain. I am absolutely stunned at how I have come, not full circle, it's not that I'm staying in here or anything, hut I am incredibly takeo with their way of life.

The miracle of being able to yield and have complete power over yourself at the same time is magical. I think that chastity is or cao be a positive act. I have veered, really, from loathing it to admiring it beyond measure. Thiogs that I found absolutely painfully cruel, this kneeling when they sin or wheo they feel they've sinned, I oow see as a remarkahle force.

Tonight somebody did it, they dropped a knife again and up they got, knelt down aod picked it up. I saw somebody else smiling during vespers and she immediately knelt for a momeot. If all of us knelt at the moment of our sin, how many of us would check a much bigger sin that's around the corner? It is a lesson in the kind of possibility that human dignity can have. So if any of my friends notice me having the odd kneel, randomly in the middle of a conversation, they can know from now on that I've had a bad thought.

WORDS OF THE WEEK

'One of the nuns burst into tears. So I decided she was having a bad veil day'

Actress Fiona Shaw (right) decided to join a nunnery in central London for two weeks. She recorded her experiences for Radio 4

INSIDE

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Playing in five dimensions

William Hartston devises the game to end all games – and to decide which ones suit you

Spin the wheel for the game of your choice – or just look at the shaded segments to appreciate its true qualities. And don't forget the alcohol.

Games are traditionally classified into categories such as board games, card games, dice games, race games, war games, role-playing games, murder-mystery games and a dozen or more other categories which provide no more than the most superficial description of what the game is all about. Today, we offer a complete taxonomy of competitive games – a classification system that goes beneath the surface of each game to provide a way to judge whether it meets your requirements.

An analysis of the important factors that really distinguish one game from another reveals five major dimensions that need to be taken into account when deciding whether a particular game suits you. The first concerns the number of participants and, in particular, the number on each side. The real question to ask yourself here is whether you want to shoulder absolute responsibility for the result of the game. Or, to put it another way, do you want someone else to blame when you lose? If you demand all the glory of victory, and are prepared to accept the full ignominy of defeat, you will choose chess or backgammon rather than a partnership game such as bridge, or a board game, such as Trivial Pursuit, that can be played in teams. In general, team games are for the gregarious, individual games for the asocial, and partnership games for the anti-social (with only one co-team member to blame when things go wrong, partnership games are perfectly designed to provoke arguments). The situation is, however, further confused by some of the most popular games, such as Monopoly or Cluedo or Scrabble, which allow several individuals to compete at the same time, rather like athletes running in separate lanes. For the most competitive, this offers the chance to beat a number of opponent all at once, while for the less ambitious it offers a sense of community with one's co-losers. (Hint: when playing Scrabble, always try to sit on the immediate left of a non-competitive, social type. They always try to maximise their own score, irrespective of whether it leave opportunities for the next player to make a killing on a triple word score.)

The second major dimension is the role luck plays in the game. Chance will play its part in any game played with dice (such as backgammon or Monopoly) or played under conditions of incomplete information (bridge or Cluedo) or starting with a shuffle and distribution of the elements of the game in an unequal fashion (almost any card game). In some cases, such as Cluedo and duplicate bridge, the luck element is reduced by placing all players under conditions of equal bemusement, but still some are likely to be favoured by making better guesses than others.

Depending on the degree to which you fancy your luck, you may play backgammon, card games, bingo or the National Lottery. If you feel congenitally unlucky, you may turn to chess, though even there luck plays its part. Indeed, it has been calculated that a complete beginner, playing legal moves at random, has about a one in 10^{120} chance of defeating the world champion. The most attractive balance is a game that enables us to think how clever we are when we win, but to blame our rotten luck when we lose. There is, as far as I know, only one game of total skill, and that is the game of Snap!

Next, we come to the matter of time. If we start playing at midnight, will the game be over by breakfast? Many of the most popular games of recent years, such as Connect-4, or Articulate or Jenga, are over quite quickly, and everything reset in seconds for another game. They are ideal for those of us with short attention spans who require repeated doses of a competitive thrill. Bridge offers a more sophisticated version of that recipe, with a single hand taking only a few minutes, but having the [illegible] a complete rubber potential to last considerably longer.

Then there is the important matter of study. If you want to become good at anything – and even if you are not especially competitive, most games are more enjoyable if you play them well – there are two routes: natural talent or hard work. However talented you are, however, some games demand a certain amount of study if you want to get the most out of them. In backgammon or poker, you need to learn the odds and familiarise yourself with standard techniques; in bridge, there are bidding systems to master, and in chess there are libraries of theory on openings and endgames. The older and more established a game becomes, the more difficult it is to survive on talent alone, and the easier it becomes for a diligent hard-worker to acquire all the abilities needed to compete at a high level. This, of course, has become the main problem of Trivial Pursuit: trying to answer puzzling questions on a variety of topics was fun until a breed of yuppie-nerds spoilt it all by learning all the answers.

Trivial Pursuit, however, provides us with the key to the final dimension in our taxonomy of games. We have covered competitiveness, commitment, time and talent, but there is one other factor without which many games would be incomplete: alcohol. The final question to ask of any game is: "Will it be more fun if most of the players are at least mildly intoxicated? Bridge isn't; Poker may seem so at the time, but definitely isn't in the cold morning light of a loser's hangover; chess and backgammon can be; and Monopoly, Cluedo and Trivial Pursuit definitely are improved by an injection of alcohol. So is Snap, for that matter, which shows that even a game of pure talent may be improved if you can introduce a factor that diminishes the skill level.

Games people play

Pandora Melly peers through Loyd Grossman's keyhole

Loyd Grossman, 46, television broadcaster

My only game that I was any good at was tennis. I played a *heck* of a lot at school but I wasn't a prodigy and began petering out at around 20. I suppose my real game is scuba-diving. I learned when I was 10 in the lovely tropical waters of the Caribbean and was I pretty keen – until the frigid grey threatening waters of northern New England rather damped the attraction. Once I'd learned, I felt like Jacques Cousteau, and when I went home to do it, it was like being in one of those World War II films about navy saboteurs – very cold, and very hard work.

Every year, I am fortunate enough to spend a few weeks in Thailand, during which I go diving every single day. And when I'm back in Britain, I'm involved in a couple of scuba charities which teach disabled people to dive. It means that every now and then, I'll don my scuba gear and jump into a swimming pool. Although after my childhood experience, I only really like warm water.

I am unashamed to admit that I *do* like a sport that has a lot of kit, and there's plenty of kit with scuba-diving. It's technically demanding, so you can't be sloppy and think about the phone bill. Because you have to concentrate a lot, somehow it's incredibly relaxing. Also, you get to see some great stuff – sharks, rays and eels. You never know what's going to be down there until you get into the water. There's that thrilling moment when you start descending and you just think: "Gosh, this is going to be amazing, I hope."

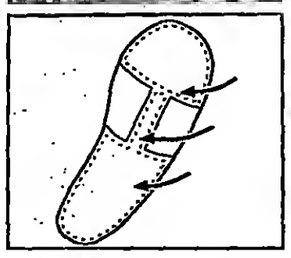
I suppose I like fishing for the same reason; it's another think on which you have to concentrate in a marginally Zen-ish way.

The Surrey-based Scuba Trust (01306-740349) offers subsidised diver training and snorkelling to anyone with a physical disability. Includes regular trips to the Red Sea. Enquiries welcome from disabled divers, volunteer instructors and benefactors. The Latimer Sub-Aqua Club (0181-840-7772) offers a similar London-based service.

Don't junk it … use it

A sticky solution to your holiday packing

When packing for a stay away from home, one is frequently faced with the problem of whether to include bedroom slippers. One never does, of course, but always regrets it. I have found a remarkably simple solution to this dilemma: I pack a tube of glue instead. Then, on arrival at my destination, I can make my own pair of slippers, which are guaranteed to be fit to throw away when it is time to return. All you need is pencil, scissors, a piece of paper, a cardboard box (available at any good refuse bin) and, of course, the glue.



Start by standing on a piece of paper and drawing round your foot (separately round each foot for the highest quality slippers) to make a template. Use the template to cut shapes (at least three per foot) out of the cardboard. Glue two together for the sole of the slipper.

In a similar fashion, make the strap of the slipper, starting by wrapping a piece of paper about three inches wide over and around the ball of your foot. Place your foot on the slipper-sole to mark where the strap should be glued, then glue it. Cut and glue additional shapes to fill in the spaces made by the glued strap. Complete with a final sole-shaped piece glued to hold everything in place. It's surprisingly comfortable and will last a short holiday.

Bawn O'Beirne-Ranelagh

The games page is edited by William Hartston

Chess William Hartston

Being by inclination a player rather than a problemist, I generally find mate-in-three problems too difficult. I can solve a mate-in-two, if only by looking at every possibility, but three-movers are too much of a strain. Unless, of course, I cheat by looking up the answer and then appreciating the ingenuity of the composer – which is what I did with the mate-in-three above. Composed by A Lobusov, it won first prize in a composing tournament in the Soviet Union in 1983.

When you first look at the position, it seems quite clear that the key to the action will lie on the e-file. At some stage, the knight will move from e6 to deliver a fatal discovered check. The only trouble is that any move of the knight will leave the pawn on f4 unprotected and let the black king escape with Kxf4. We could defend the pawn with 1.g3, but that would let the king escape to f3. No, it's clear that what we have to do is persuade Black to play Rxf4, blocking that square for his king. So all we need is a first move that contains a threat that can only be met by Rxf4. But why should Black possibly want to play Rxf4?

You will never solve the problem at all if you think in this apparently logical manner. The key is to stop yourself thinking about the e-file, which has no part in the solution.

The answer begins with the unlikely looking 1.Rd8! carrying the remarkable threat of 2.Bd5+! Kxd5 3.Nf6 mate. Black has three possible defences:

a) 1...Ne3 covers the d5 square but takes away a possible flight square from the black king. White mates with 2.Nf6+ Nxf6 3.Bxd3.

b) 1...d2 creates room to answer 2.Bd5+ with Kd3, but White instead plays 2.Bd3+! Kxd3 3.Nxe5 mate when the pawn on d2 prevents the king from running away.

c) 1...Rxf4 also prevents the main threat (2.Bd5+ Kxd5 3.Nf6 Ke5) but now, because f4 is occupied, White has 2.Nxe5+ Nxe5 3.Bd5 mate.

Quite apart from the beautifully hidden key, the subsequent white moves in the above variations also exhibit a cyclical effect: Bd5 and Nf6, then Nf6 and Bd3, then Bd3 and Ne5, and finally Ne5 and Bd5.

No, I would not have solved it had I not been able to read the answer.

concise crossword

No.3277 Saturday 19 April

ACROSS

1 Lingerie (6)
4 Allied oneself (5)
8 Thin biscuit (5)
9 Flowering plant (7)
10 Lie back (7)
11 Vagrant (4)
12 Alcholic drink (3)
14 Male deer (4)
15 Leave out (4)
18 Watering-place (3)
21 Competently (4)
23 Farm vehicle (7)
25 Kettledrums (7)
26 Fry quickly (5)
27 Cattle farm (5)
28 Go upwards (6)

DOWN

1 Incautious (6)
2 Shortfall (7)
3 Wages (8)
4 Unwell (4)
5 Party with music (5)
6 Mythical creature (6)
7 Bid (5)
13 Thick treacle (8)
16 Enter uninvited (7)
17 More rapidly (6)
19 Upper room (5)
20 Chum (6)
22 Fruit (5)
24 Money (4)

Solution to yesterday's Concise Crossword:

ACROSS: 1 Priam, 4 Hurry (Primary), 10 Soprano, 11 Dishy, 12 Greed, 13 Almidge, 15 Ogre, 17 China, 19 Sheer, 2 Lute, 25 Bananas, 27 Ascot, 29 Sofas, 30 Rescind, 31 Plays, 32 Tyros. DOWN: 2 Rupee, 3 Abandon, 5 Under, 6 Residue, 7 Usage, 8 Motar, 9 Types, 14 Best, 16 Gala, 18 Handful, 20 Hearsay, 21 Abuse, 23 Usury, 24 Study, 26 Nasty, 28 Cuiro.

Bridge Alan Hiron

Game all; dealer East

North
♠A
♡7 6 5 4 2
◊10 9 7 6
♣J 7 4

West
♠J 5 4 2
♡K 3
◊J 4 3
♣9 8 6 2

East
♠Q 10 9 8
♡A Q J 10 8
◊none
♣K Q 10 3

South
♠K 7 6 3
♡9
◊A K Q 8 5 3
♣A 5

"I think that I muddled that," apologised South after going down in 5◊ on this deal. "You were unlucky. I am sure that I would have played it the same way," his partner replied, tactfully if not truthfully. Well, how would you have tackled matters after heart leads?

East opened 1♡ and South bid 3◊. In the old-fashioned style still usually played in the rubber game, this was strong and North found a raise to 4◊. South went on to game in diamonds. West led the king and another heart.

Declarer ruffed and cashed ◊A, expecting to make an early claim. There was a hitch, however, when East showed out. Next came the ♣A, a club to the ace, the ♣K and a spade ruff. It was easy enough to come to hand with a top trump and ruff the last spade, but now the lead was on the table. Declarer led a club but, hardly surprisingly, East was able to win and push through a third round of hearts to promote his partner's ◊J for the setting trick.

Well, what was South's error (which I am quite sure that North had spotted)? It was premature to draw any rounds of trumps before unblocking ♣A. Try the ♣A at trick two – surely safe enough. Now declarer comes to hand with a trump (discovering the now only mildly irritating 3-0 break in the suit), and ruffs a spade. Then he comes to hand with a second top trump, ruffs his last small spade, and still has ♣A as a re-entry to hand to complete the drawing of trumps.

Perplexity

Mixed doubles:

Baby prig chose loon's ringlets slices.

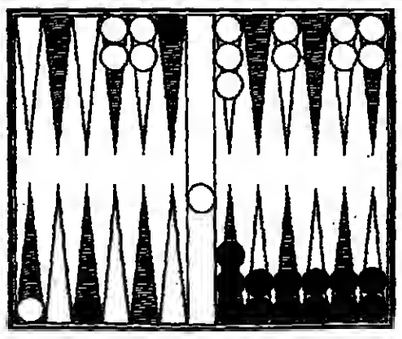
The above sentence conceals three connected answers each of two words. To find them, all you have to do is to group the six given words into three pairs, then rearrange the letters within each pair.

A prize of the new *Chambers 21st Dictionary* will be awarded to the sender of the first set of correct answers, when we open entries on 30 April. Answers to: Perplexity, *The Independent*, 1 Canada Square, Canary Wharf, London E14 5DL

5 April answers:
Fax machine (chief ax-man)
Mobile phone (Holbein poem),
Word processor (sorrow corposed)

Winner: Roderick Main (Norwich).

Backgammon Chris Bray



I have decided to give myself the hard luck story of the year award for the position above. Playing at the Double Fives against Barry "Bigplay" MacAdam, I was Black and looking forward to ending Barry's run in the box with a well-deserved gammon.

I rolled 2-1. No excitement there as I moved 10/7. I rolled again and out popped another 2-1. I carefully played 7/5, 6/5, laughingly pointing out to my partner that this was better than 7/4 as it protected against me breaking my board if I next rolled double 2.

My partner laughed at the joke and I rolled again. Guess what – 2-2! I calmly played 5/1(2) and decided that the fates were being mildly amusing but that one could have too much of a good thing. I shook the dice long and hard, threw them through the baffle box and out popped – you'll never guess – 2-2! With a forced grin, I played 6/2(2). Barry rolled 6-4 which he naturally played bar/19, 13/9. After one of the longest dice shakes ever recorded at the Double Fives, I rolled once more – you will never believe it but, yes, both of those little cubes came to rest with the number '2' uppermost. Now Barry sensed a chance of victory. There are no prizes for guessing his roll. It was 2-2! He played this 9/7(2)*, 7/5(2). I stayed on the bar, he redoubled and my partner and I had to drop.

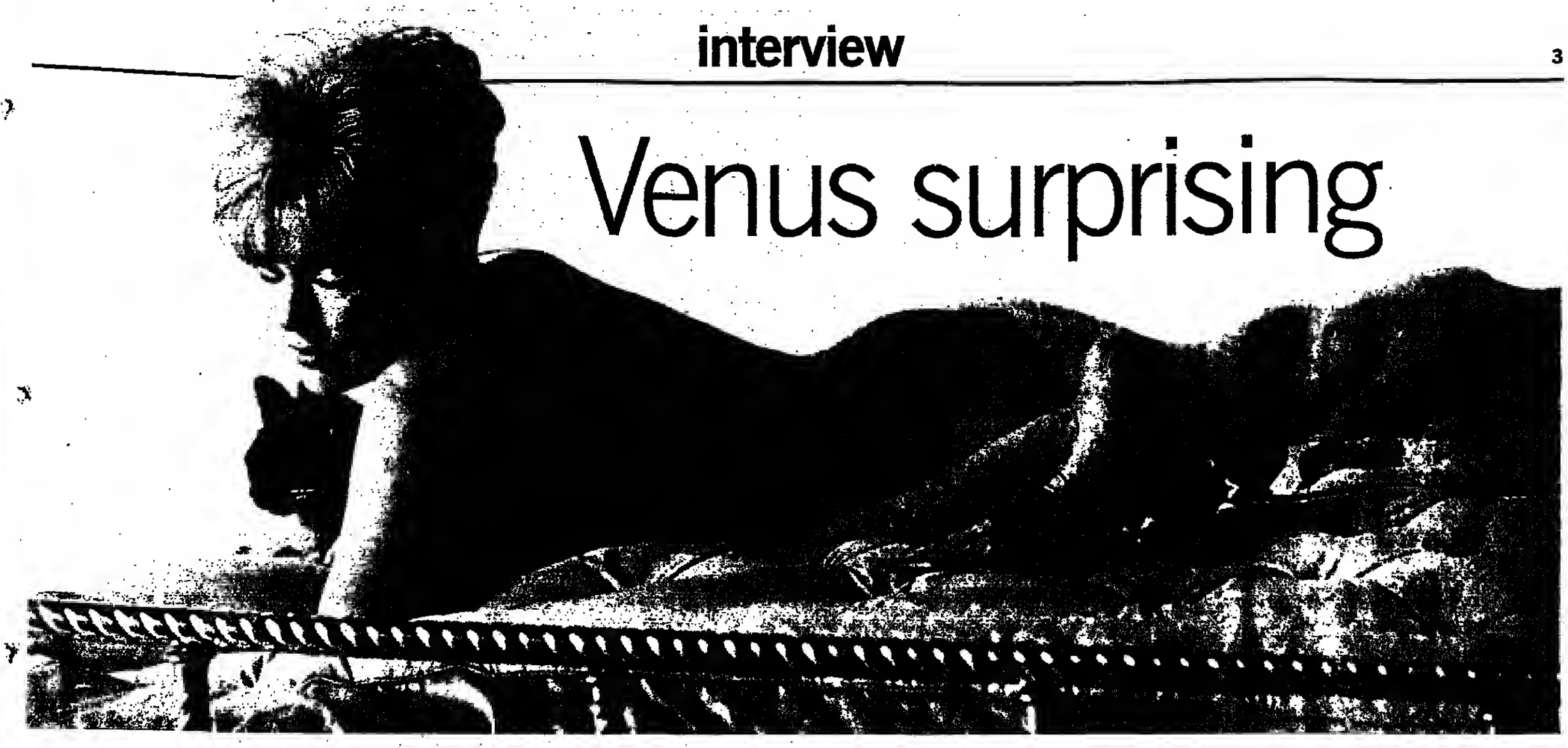
The odds of not being able to get past a two-point block in five rolls are 59,049 to 1. In the original position, Black will win 97 per cent of the time, 60 per cent of which will be gammons. However, note that White wins 3 per cent (normally as he hits a blot in the bear-off), so remember, until you can definitely hear the fat lady singing, never give up!

For the weather, traffic reports, the sky at night, and Damion Hurts the cartoon sage of artistic angst …TURN TO PAGE 31

هكذا من الأصل

هكذا من الأصل

Venus surprising



A Sex Doll bred for the boudoir: Kim Novak (above) and with James Stewart in Hitchcock's 'Vertigo' (below left); Novak as she is today (below right) PHOTOGRAPHS: COURTESY KOBAL (above); TONY BUCKINGHAM (below)

Kim Novak talks to John Lyttle

Kim Novak is clad from head to toe in exquisitely cut black-and-pale skin: "You like the pant suit? I wore it to the premiere of *Vertigo* yesterday. Did you enjoy *Vertigo*? You did? The restoration is magnificent. I think *Vertigo* is one of Hitchcock's best..." The voice tunes in and out.

> **'I was made to feel I was continually saying the wrong thing. It was: little girls should be seen and not heard. I wanted to be heard'**

You're obliged to come close, break into what psychologists call Intimate Space to catch the soft breeze of drifting sentences.

Off-screen Kim Novak talks in the same whisper that drives the happily married Kirk Douglas to adultery in *Strangers When We Meet*, and talks as much with her hands as her wet, discreetly pink lips. Delicate, fluttering gestures punctuate points about, oh, why she abandoned Hollywood nearly 30 years ago and "went back to nature"; why she believes in embracing good and bad both, for that's destiny; why her "comfortable, lower-middle-class Chicago upbringing" gave her a security Marilyn never had.

"Marilyn..." Novak says. In the Fifties, industry wisdom ran: Marilyn parodies sex, Mansfield parodies Marilyn, and Novak *is* sex. "Sex. Sex symbols." Novak shrugs. She repeats the words, maintains your gaze: "Not all of us made it, you know."

Novak did, however, though her fragile, lost and infinitely suffering image may have made her appear an ideal candidate for her own chapter in *Hollywood Babylon*. She's alarmingly tiny: a smoky blonde pocket Venus, a last gasp Sex Doll bred for the boudoir. But then, most of the Golden Age's Love Goddesses were tellingly diminutive, with constricted waists, short necks and barrage-balloon breasts. Even so, they usually towered over the studio chiefs and suffocating pretend-fathers who thought they were charged with running the lives of their ungrateful chattel, no matter how powerful at the box-office. Elizabeth Taylor, five feet and maybe one inch, could look down on MGM's Louis B Mayer, and Monroe, hardly an amazon but Queen of the Fox lot, was well used to greeting the top of Darryl Zanuck's swollen head. But Kim Novak's ogre was the biggest and the smallest – bastard of the bunch: Columbia's Harry "King" Cohn.

> **'I think that what some people view as misogyny was jealousy, that Hitchcock may have wanted to have been a beautiful blonde'**

Cohn had made, and was later discarded by, Rita Hayworth, and wasn't about to have Hayworth's successor do the same. Every day, he'd gloat aloud how he had taken small-town beauty pageant winner Marilyn Pauline Novak and, through sheer force of will created the cool, creamy Kim, loudly boasting to the good old boys in the press corps that he could select any mug's sister, mother or aunt and perform the same miracle.

"Harry?" Novak sighs. "Harry thought he'd raised me up so he could pull me down, pull me down, pull me down. I'd say, 'Harry, you didn't make me a star. Columbia didn't make me star. The audience noticed me in *Picnic* and *The Man with the Golden Arm* and they made me a star.' But he'd still call me into his office and read out my bad reviews. He'd repeat the really hurtful lines. He knew I'd remember them. Harry got a kick out of humiliating me."

No wonder she says she's more comfortable with "the *real* animal world" out there on Big Sur; surrounded, and (one senses) protected, by her adored dogs, cats, deer, horses, trout... She names each as if it's part of a chant and isn't above getting mystical about trees: "Oh, trees move me to tears. They did my father too. A tree is so perfect in its... acceptance. In fact, when I was a girl, I was teased because kids were picking flowers on the way to school and I'd cry. They'd tell me I was crazy." Harry and Hollywood, of course, told her much the same thing for daring to speak her mind: "Harry said I was being renamed Kit Marlowe and I said no. He exploded. I was stupid, I was dumb...

"I was made to feel I was continually saying the wrong thing. It was: little girls should be seen and not heard. I wanted to be heard."

One way she made herself heard was by dating Sammy Davis Jnr, shocking in an era when white women seen with black men could be, and were, beaten. Not that the romance was meant to be a defiant statement about either her independent will or braving the colour bar. For a while, her career stood on the brink. "It just didn't make sense to me. What, I shouldn't see Sammy because he's black and because they won't show my movies in the South? I said to Harry, OK, then they don't show my movies in the South.

"I was going to continue to see Sammy, come hell or high water. I knew lots of blacks and Jews. I identified with minorities. Those feelings shouldn't be lip service, but put into action."

"Harry got his Mob friends involved. They threatened Sammy." Davis married a black dancer three weeks later. "Harry had a heart attack. When I was called to his office after that he would make a show of popping his nitrates. Unbelievable.

"But I feel bad. In his own way, Harry wanted to protect me – I was an investment. I've always felt partially responsible for his dying." She hesitates. "Did you know there was even a reference to me in Harry's will? His curse was, 'Now I'm never going to make another movie for you, Novak'... After he was gone no one knew how to choose, they were all used to him making the decisions. I didn't get many exciting parts after his death. He was a bully, but Harry's humiliations made me stronger, not weaker. He taught me to resist."

Yet, she, not Cohn has the reputation for temperament. It's followed her off the A-list and down the years, so she could seem a rinky-dink cliché. A nutty Norma Desmond figure with an entire zoo-full of monkeys to bury by candlelight, another great beauty abused by the business and turned a little wacko because of it. Gossip, stale gossip, ancient gossip: she was hitched to Shakespearean Great White Hope Richard Johnson and left him to marry a vet and rear llamas. And no children, just pets and more pets. What does that tell you, hmm?

"That's not it," Novak protests. "I never thought of it as a retirement or even a leaving. I was stagnant, playing the same stereotypes. I started to surrender. I thought, 'It's tough fighting them all the time. Perhaps I should go along with it.' And I hated to feel that. I needed a continuation of real life. I had to get clear of Kim Novak."

Yet the public must co-exist with the private. Long fingers fuss through artful gold corkscrew clusters around the smooth, perfect oval of the face, framing clear, kohl-smudged eyes. Pushing 65, Novak's lustre has become ceremonial: she's aware of what becomes a legend most. Casing the room, instructing her PR handmaiden on the approved type of individual, half-inch false eyelashes required – "black, very, very black" – she studies the available light and instinctively tilts high cheekbones to surf the rays. She's mesmerising, a languid study in slow-motion. Sudden movement is tossed to others. The photographer is ordered to stand, sway, bend, bounce and shoot from above to eliminate any fine lines. He takes mild umbrage, and Novak both teases and charmingly pulls rank: "I've worked with Billy Wilder. I know what I'm doing."

And she does know what she's doing. A switch is flipped. Within seconds she's at full wattage and the photographer is buzzing about, obedient to her command. The seduction would be pure camp if it weren't also utterly professional. Photos taken, Kim Novak switches off as she instantly switched on. Magic Time's over, folks.

Not entirely. She's here in London, sitting pretty at the Dorchester (of course) to promote Hitchcock's *Vertigo*. With the received wisdom of hindsight, the million-dollar Technicolor touch-up is being sold as scarcely sublimated directorial autobiography, Jimmy Stewart's obsessive-compulsive transformation of Novak's Judy into the vision of his dead love Madeleine being exactly the treatment (punishment?) Hitchcock inflicted on his hapless contract signings Tippi Hedren and Vera Miles. Yet the film succeeds in its simultaneously clinical and sumptuously romantic dissection of lovesickness because *Vertigo* is as much Novak's life story as Hitchcock's.

Each ritual sacrifice Stewart forces Judy through – the dye job, the weight loss, the cosmetic refinements – Harry Cohn had already visited upon "the fat Polack". Hitchcock was congratulated for prising a performance out of the scandal sheets' favourite party girl – and every woman who dated Aly Khan was then considered a party girl – but, as Novak points out, the director mostly left her be. Literally. She didn't need assistance playing herself.

"Harry didn't get it," Novak notes. "He didn't want me to do *Vertigo*. He said, 'It's a lousy script.' So I read it expecting a lousy script and I thought, God, this is why I'm here. It wouldn't have been right for anyone else in that period that I can think of. It was predestined. This was who I was. It was what was going on."

Vertigo certainly encapsulates something Novak's other roles exploited. Not just what critics of the period dismissed as her "bovine acceptance" of fate's injuries, although that is stringmined, but the idea that she's seldom quite what she's first presented as. In *Bell, Book and Candle*, she's a witch pretending to be human; in *Boys' Night Out*, she's a sociology student posing as a prostitute; in *The Notorious Landlady*, she's an innocent branded a murderess. There's always someone else behind the glittering facade. Hitchcock, she says, understood facades. "Making *Vertigo*, I thought Hitchcock knew exactly, and could feel, the oppression of being a woman. Here was someone who was deathly frightened of being *seen* for what he really was... Have you noticed in his movie cameos he seldom presents himself straight on? It's a glimpse, a profile...

"That's why he was so fascinated by women. Our masks. There's an envy too. I think that what many people view as his misogyny is jealousy, that Alfred Hitchcock on some level may have wanted to have been a beautiful blonde. Am I making sense?"

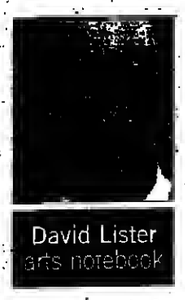
Certainly. It might also explain why Hitchcock allowed himself to be talked into taking Novak on after Vera Miles fell pregnant. "I was too awkward, too self-conscious for Hitchcock. And too inflexible in a lot of ways. But, at the same time, he recognised there was a reason why I was in this: 'There's a reason why I've picked you, though you're not someone I would have first chosen'."

Perhaps what Hitchcock recognised was the iron will reviewers seldom acknowledged but Harry Cohn sought to crush. Yet what's startling today isn't the flashes of metal under the sequins but Novak's apparent lack of anger. That wouldn't be allowed room on screen until she played Mildred the cockney waitress in the remake of *Of Human Bondage*, and it hastened her career decline. Weren't there ever days when she woke up choking on her own rage? Or is her stoicism also something inherited from her father, a man who renounced his dream of living in the woods so his wife could stay in the city, and never quite recovered? Novak waves the question away: "Be angry? There's no point. I don't scream and shout and wave banners."

What she did instead was escape. "You know what I used to do when I came to London before? I'd bring a bag full of different looks and adopt a disguise and head for Speakers' Corner.

"I'd get on a soapbox and speak passionately about being a woman, about the planet and nature and all those things. And I was thrilled because the crowds didn't know who I was and they still listened. They took me seriously." Novak brushes a speck of imaginary lint off her flattering black pant suit. "But when I was Kim Novak, no one listened. They just wanted to take my picture. I could only be heard when I wasn't her."

'Vertigo' goes on release this Friday



David Lister
arts notebook

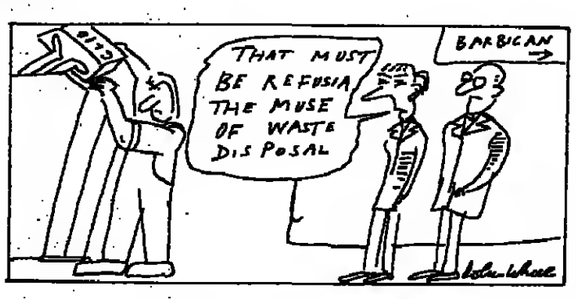
The arts took centre stage, literally, in the election campaign yesterday. Sir Richard Eyre allowed the National Theatre's Lyttelton auditorium to host the main arts debate of the campaign. The only pity was that the cast was one of understudies.

Mark Fisher, the No 2 spokesman for Labour, at least has some claims to what Equity might call star status, as he has written most of Labour's policy. But David Mellor for the Tories is a back bencher, whatever his ministerial past, and cannot speak for the Government at all. At least the two main parties managed to find MPs. The Lib Dems didn't. Janet Ludlow, a Tower Hamlets councillor, was the party's spokeswoman.

So what happened to the desire of Virginia Bottomley, Jack Cunningham and Robert MacLellan to star at the National Theatre? Jennifer Edwards, director of the National Campaign for the Arts, has organised the four national debates. (The others, in Birmingham, Manchester and Cardiff, attracted their share of understudies too.) The two main parties told her that Mrs Bottomley and Mr Cunningham were too busy campaigning nationally (and we've heard such a lot from them in the past four weeks, haven't we?). Mr MacLellan simply has too many briefs apparently.

Perhaps the main party spokespeople have heard reports about how their understudies were put under the spotlight in Cardiff. After rehearsing several platitudes, they were interrupted by the director of Cardiff's Sherman Theatre, who said lack of funding meant his theatre was likely to close and he would be issuing redundancies soon. The Welsh MPs on stage agreed they could do nothing about it.

Ms Edwards wearily but accurately summed it up: "No, the arts aren't being given sufficient attention in the campaign. But when you've got sleaze, Europe and fish out of the way, there doesn't seem to be much time left for other issues." Perhaps the National Theatre should have advertised the debate on its neon sign overlooking the Thames as "Arts, Sleaze and Fish — The Way Forward". That might have got the party leaders in, and a Dimbleby to chair them.



Talking of David Mellor (briefly, I promise you), I see that his namesake, Dr David Mellor, the art expert who curated the Sixties art exhibition at the Barbican a couple of years ago, is curating *Les Sixties: Great Britain and France 1962-73*, an Anglo-French exhibition for the Brighton Festival. Curiously, on the publicity material he is now called Dr David Alan Mellor. Why this decision to use his middle name in his middle years? Alan is a nice name, a goodly name. But no need to flaunt it... unless as a serious art historian and academic you are reluctant to be confused with a politician who dabbles in the arts. Dr David Alan is too sensitive. He should relish the confusion. Come the next election campaign, he'll probably be debating arts policy on the stage of the National Theatre.

I'm sorry to learn that the Royal Ballet has cancelled George Balanchine's *Apollo*, one of the highlights of the next month. But for once they should be congratulated on the last-minute cancellation. It emerges that The George Balanchine Trust in New York notified the company that it requires detailed casting approval and moreover would not give the company a licence to perform *Apollo* until a representative had seen the final dress rehearsal on 29 April, the day before the first performance, with no guarantee that approval would then be given. This patronising and offhand attitude takes the biscuit. Having watched Sarah Wildor bring the house down dancing Juliet this week, and Darcey Bussell and Sylvie Guillem provoke a black market in tickets for *La Bayadère* a fortnight before, I am in no doubt that the Royal Ballet is enjoying a marvellous season. Indeed, *Apollo* was going to star Darcey Bussell and Irek Mukhamedov, not exactly a cast that needs anyone's prior approval. The guardians of the Balanchine Trust should get off their high horses and read some reviews.

Serena Mackesy: on the inside looking out; Jasper Rees on TV; Robert Hanks on Radio TURN TO PAGE 31

arts & books

The mother of reinvention

For three decades, Caryl Churchill has been turning British theatre on its head. Yet, for the past three years, she has gone to ground. With a sudden spate of revivals and new work in the offing, the playwright granted David Benedict a rare interview to explain why

Caryl Churchill: 'I just got bored with it. That feeling of "Was I going to start thinking about another play just because I was a playwright?" ' PHOTO: EDWARD SYKES

If you could stop MORI polling people about their voting intentions for a few seconds and persuade them to ask people to name this country's greatest living dramatist, most people would probably plump for Harold Pinter or David Hare. Regardless of their incontestable stature – plays as good as *Old Times* or *Racing Demon* don't fall exactly from the trees – a substantial body of opinion would place Caryl Churchill at the top of the list. Only last week, Mark Ravenhill, author of last year's surprise hit *Shopping and Fucking* wrote: "I read *Top Girls* at least once a year and I weep. One day, I think, one day I'll write something as good."

For those unlucky enough never to have seen Churchill's definitive play about the 1980s – a dazzlingly dramatic and politically astute analysis of what it took to rise to the top – which *The Guardian* awarded the backhanded compliment of being "the best play ever from a woman dramatist" – there's some late news just in. It's unofficial, unannounced and unbelievably overdue, but 1997 is the year of Caryl Churchill. Earlier this year, the National Theatre's tour of her 1976 play set around the English Civil War, *Light Shining in Buckinghamshire*, opened at the Cottesloe; *Cloud Nine*, her magnificently funny and sharp-witted modern classic about patriarchy, patriotism and sexual politics is back in a major revival at the Old Vic; *Hotel*, her latest collaborative piece for the trailblazing dance / music-theatre company Second Stride opens in London next week; and her new doublebill *Blue Heart* will open at the Edinburgh Festival in August. All of which goes some way to making up for three barren years.

Her astonishingly ambitious *The Skriker*, a vast social panorama with Kathryn Hunter as a shapeshifting underworld creature, which took Churchill years to write, opened at the National in 1994 to the bafflement of many, who were misled by the production. Others hailed it as a masterpiece. But since then, apart from her translation of Seneca's *Thyestes* for the Royal Court, the rest has been silence. You could be forgiven for thinking that she'd given up writing. You'd be right. Happily, though, she's had a change of heart; yet the playwright continues to be elusive, shying away from the media circus surrounding the business of theatre. Like much of her finest work, *Top Girls* was directed by Max Stafford-Clark. He deals with her reticence very simply: "She really wants the work to express what she's doing."

Fair enough. This isn't the disdainful aloofness of some theatrical *grande dame*. In fact, when she finally accedes to my request to meet during rehearsals for *Hotel*, she's thoughtful and generous and anxious to dispel any suggestion of frosty, lofty indifference. She apologises for seeming "difficult" but points out the absurdity of our meeting. "It's an odd kind of conversation," she muses, "there's more going on than just two people in a room. You're doing your job. It's going to be read by a lot of people, and when it's printed, it has a definitive quality which then gets quoted back at you 15 years later. It's also not a conversation because it's so one way…" And then, all of a sudden, the guarded nervousness gives way to laughter. "Never mind," she says, the shutters opening to reveal a welcoming smile leaping across her face.

She was an only child. Her father, a cartoonist, and her mother, a fashion model, moved from London to Montreal when she was 10, and she began writing short stories and producing living-room pantomimes. At 14, she wrote a full-length children and ponies book and was also improvising plays with a friend. "We would work out in some detail what was going to happen and we would play it, and, if we hadn't quite liked how it went, we would play it again." During her time at Oxford at the end of the Fifties, she won first prize at the National Student Drama Festival with her play *Downstairs*. Her first work to receive a professional production was *The Ants*, a radio play, a form which suited her because there was a market for it (and no fringe theatre in the early Sixties) and because she was raising her children.

The (then) estimable theatre journal *Plays and Players* declared *Light Shining in Buckinghamshire*, in which different actors played the same character, to be "one of the finest pieces of English playwrighting for years", but the big break came three years later in 1979 with *Cloud Nine*. Like *Light Shining*, it was written for Max Stafford-Clark's company Joint Stock and its dynamite cast (including Julie Covington, Antony Sher and Miriam Margolyes) who were wittily embracing gender-bending long before anyone dreamed of the term. Joint Stock pioneered a collaborative approach to playwriting, something which has had a marked effect on Churchill and scores of writers since. "It was very exhilarating because it was a completely different way of working." Wasn't it scary giving up authorial control? "Yes, a little bit, but there's a misconception sometimes that the actual writing process becomes collaborative. Some companies create wholly devised plays but I've never gone that far into collaboration." Joint Stock's method was based on an extended workshop / research period, after which the writer would go away and write. "And then there is more rewriting in rehearsal because you've got a group of people you work with and trust. And they trust you because you've all shared that research time. I would be much more open to changing things than if it had been something I had written alone."

Since then, Churchill's work has split between plays created on her own and those that have grown out of collaboration, notably the dance/ theatre works *The Lives of the Great Poisoners* and the forthcoming two-part *Hotel*, both written with long-term co-conspirators choreographer Ian Spink and composer Orlando Gough for Second Stride. "*Hotel* started from an idea I had of something which might work as an opera with Orlando, which was of eight lots of people in eight rooms, which would appear on stage as one room." Eyebrows might be raised at the idea of a dance company presenting an opera, but if anyone can pull it off, it's these three whose experience, versatility and sheer success rate with formal experiment is matched by no one in this country except Lloyd Newson and DV8.

"She reinvents herself every time," says Stafford-Clark, who points to Churchill's constant formal experimentation in the creation of overlapping dialogue in *Top Girls* or her comedy of City greed, *Serious Money*, written entirely in (deeply unfashionable) verse. Despite British Telecom's refusal to allow the use of its phones on stage ("This is a production with which no public company would wish to be associated"), it transferred to the West End and became a smash hit. Stafford-Clark, however, admits to finding her challenge terrifying. "She asks you to do things that haven't been done before. You think, 'Maybe it won't work, and we can't do it'." He obviously thrives on the terror, though, and you can hear the thrill in his voice as he prepares to team up again for *Blue Heart*. Other playwrights are more famous, he concedes, but then counters: "Her influence has been enormous and not just on other writers. You go into schools and you tell them 'We're doing some plays by Caryl Churchill' and that she might be involved and teachers faint and genuflect. She shaped the way they teach and think about drama."

When Churchill began writing, virtually the only other major female dramatist was Agatha Christie. Perhaps her most significant move was the shift away from the semi-autobiographical stance adopted by women novelists. Theatre is a much more public artform and Churchill has taken that to heart, making ideas, emotions and structure indivisible. I point out that almost none of her plays follow the traditional route of the journey of a single protagonist, an idea that surprises her. She mulls it over. "When I was working with Joint Stock, I think there was a strong anti-sentimental feeling about in theatre. There was an attraction to making continuities with dramatic ideas rather than going a long way down an emotional journey… which didn't mean there wouldn't be very emotional things." That's certainly borne out by the poignant final image in Tom Cairns's new production of *Cloud Nine*, where the mother confronts the ghostly image of her younger self.

With all this year's burst of dramatic activity, can it be true that, three years ago, she stopped writing? She tenses up again. Then relents. "Oh, I don't mind…" She runs a long hand through a mane of silver hair. "I just got bored with it. That feeling of 'Was I going to start thinking about another play just because I was a playwright?' I've had it before. I remember that, in 1978, I decided I definitely wasn't going to be a writer any more. It took me about four months to get out of my head the idea that I was a writer and once I'd done it, of course, I started writing again." Her laughter fills the chilly rehearsal room. She looks at me, confidingly, her gaunt, gravely beautiful head resting on one hand. "I think I wanted to wait until I missed it."

'Cloud Nine': Old Vic, London (0171-928 7616) to 26 Apr; 'Hotel': the Place, London from Tues-Sat (0171-387 0161) and the Manchester Dance House 2-3 May (0161-237 9753)

NEXT WEEK IN

THE INDEPENDENT

MONDAY

SIAN PHILLIPS

talks to Deborah Ross about marriage to Peter O'Toole, her passion for Madonna and Dame Judi Dench's gardening tips

with MEDIA+

TUESDAY

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Cutting edge know-how on computers and IT

THURSDAY

EDUCATION+

Essential reading for everyone who educates, is being educated or cares about the biggest national debate of our time

THE INDEPENDENT

IT IS…ARE YOU?

our view on view critical view overview	THE PLAY Tom and Clem	THE FILM Everyone Says I Love You	IN CONCERT Jane Birkin
overview	Richard Wilson directs Stephen Churchett's debut play set at the 1945 Potsdam conference with Michael Gambon as the homosexual, high-church, very left-wing Labour MP Tom Driberg and Alec McCowen as the new Labour PM Clement Attlee plus a spy subplot courtesy of Daniel de la Falaise and Sarah Woodward.	Woody Allen, blithe of spirit, takes his standard plot of a nebbish neurotic in search of love but turns it into a musical comprised of his favourite standards. With Alan Alda, Drew Barrymore, Lukas Haas (the boy from *Witness*), Goldie Hawn, Julia Roberts, Tim Roth and hot property Edward (*Larry Flynt, Primal Fear*) Norton.	Chanteuse and actress, (a former National Theatre player in *The Women of Troy*) Jane Birkin, whose Sixties hit "Je t'aime (Moi Non Plus)" brought a whole new meaning to breath control and is one of the world's greatest one-hit wonders, appeared here for the first time in three years with a band of nine musicians.
critical view	Paul Taylor found it "reasonably entertaining, reasonably thought-provoking and unreasonably derivative … excellent Alec McCowen … Gambon puts on a fine display." "A mixed bag … single entendres are scattered throughout the play … offers more to big name scalphunters than dinner-table dabaters," agreed the *FT*. "In Richard Wilson's elegantly staged production, the arguments are projected with great force by the two leading actors … manages to amuse and delight," declared *The Guardian*. "So entertaining and timely a discussion about the claims of idealism and compromise," applauded *The Times*. "Thanks to Gambon and McCowen, disgraceful jokes and the subject's spurious topicality, it makes for an entertaining evening," decided *The Telegraph*. "Close encounters become a high theatrical delight," cheered *The Standard*.	Adam Mars-Jones enjoyed the mix. "For every piece of wry realism there's an unabashed resort to escapism … Another example of Allen's particular blend of romanticism, therapy, middle-brow comedy and undemanding art film." "There's a lot to be said for the simple joys of escapism … A charming, sweet-natured *divertisement*. Enjoy yourself," trilled *Time Out*. "The sunniest, most light-hearted, most joyous movie of [his] famously ambivalant career," sang *The Telegraph*. "Rarely less than charming and likeable … one of his wittiest scripts," hummed the *New Statesman*. "This fragile film is fading away from a malnourished plot," brayed *The Times*. "A peculiar, unsatisfying confection … If he really wants to do a musical, Stephen Sondheim probably lives only a few blocks away," cried *The Guardian*.	Magnus Mills was bemused by the adoration of her fans, implicating himself when reporting that "insensitive members of the audience were seen laughing". "The gap-toothed English girl with the thing about Serge Gainsbourg was seldom less than endearing as she exuded a scatty warmth and dispensed any number of moue-moue kisses to her band and fans – the Birkin heads … *formidable*? Not quite," marked the *Standard*. "Your reviewer found herself stifling a sob … Quintessentially French balladry with strings and accordion stuck on … thrilling because she was behaving as we imagined a real chanteuse would," sighed *The Guardian*. "Mawkishness run amok. Birkin's thin, fragile voice appeared close to cracking on occasion, but that is also part of the charm," reckoned *The Times*.
on view	At the Aldwych Theatre, London WC2 (0171-836 6404) to 26 July.	Cert 12, 91 mins. on selected release.	Been and gone. (Quelle horreur!).
our view	Stephen Churchett, aka Marcus, the Mitchell brothers' lawyer on *EastEnders*, wrote a play and just months later, here it is with stars in tha leads in the West End. Undemanding but undoubtedly entertaining and well-timed.	When is a musical not a musical? When it's Woody Allen. Deeply superficial, but utterly charming, unless you're allergic to Allen, in which case you wouldn't go anyway. Delightful performances, especially Edward Norton and Goldie Hawn.	Love her or loathe her, la Birkin either rings your bell or induces fits of snorting into your mouchoir. A bona-fide fan event.

KEY: EXCELLENT · GOOD · OK · POOR · DEADLY

هكذا من الأصل

هكذا من الأصل

Paul Gladstone Reid, tired of people telling him to 'Take off your shirt, put on some baby oil and let's have you on *Top of the Pops*'
PHOTOGRAPH: EMMA BOAM

Miracles will happen

At 17, Paul Reid was being hailed as the great black hope of British jazz. A decade later, he's busy reinventing himself as a serious composer. Why, he's even written an opera. By Phil Johnson

Already, perhaps, there are historical dissertations in cultural studies being written about the British jazz revival of the mid- to late-Eighties. This was a period when no lager ad was complete without a tootiog behop saxophonist either in the frame or on the soundtrack, and when products as diverse as aftershave and credit cards were given a new jazz spin. It was the period of Courtney Pine's first, incredihly successful album; of an Art Blakey residency at Ronnie Scott's that attracted droves of young jazz aspirants; and of cover stories in the style mags which, being fairly new themselves, were a ready market for cool monochrome pics of elegantly moody hlack men to place alongside ads for expensive clothes and *parfums*.

A new jazz generation of mainly black artists were signed up by the record companies, made their debut albums and theo, as the market began to recede, found themselves cruelly abandoned to a career of *cappuccino*-money gigs in bars and cafés across town. Even the spiritual home of the period, Camden's Jazz Café, was taken over by an Irish eotrepreneur and bad its upstairs bar colonised hy drunken ex-Pogues.

The composer and pianist Paul Gladstone Reid is both a casualty and a beneficiary of those years. At the precocious age of 17, he made the cover of jazz mag *The Wire* as Sheffield's answer to avant-garde American free-jazz pianist Cecil Taylor. He supported Norwegian saxophonist Jan Garbarek oo a nadooal tour and was assimilated into the avant-garde end of the new jazz asceodancy, mixing with Taylor and John Cage at the Almeida's contemporary music events and becoming known as a face that *The Face* should watch. Then, as the jazz vogue subsided, be more or less disappeared from view at the ripe old age of 18, while the style mags moved oo to daoce-music and jazz was once again bumped back down the demographic scale to a niche occupied mainly by middle-aged men in cardigans. Reid badn't even arrived before be was gone, or so it seemed.

But be has, of course, prevailed and this Thursday his new opera, *Miracles*, is to be premiered at the Royal Albert Hall (no less) as part of the "Miracles Project", a vastly ambitious programme of inner-city youth music and dance that appears as part of the Duke of Edioburgh's Award Scheme (aod let's see the style mags make a meal of that, even with the attendance of luvvie Prince Edward grooving to the vibes).

Lest it seem that the event is ooe of those worthy, community-arts "let's do the show right here!" kind of Mickey Rooney Hollywood-updates, Reid's take on the project is that of a latter-day Neo-Platonist, and be bas composed a contemporary "Mystery Opera" that places age-old arcbetypes within a frame of reference that owes more to the hermetic tradition of the Cabbala and the Gnostics than it does to the yoof-work ethic of Sir Cliff Richard's gloriously camp "The Young Ones".

Arriving slightly late for our interview appointmeot at his studio – a monk-like cell of a rehearsal room near the Wigmore Hall – Paul Gladstone Reid (whose brief burst of late-Eighdes fame was as plain Paul Reid) can't resist a quick dart over the keys of his piano. Dressed in neat Nike leisure-wear and with a face still beautiful enough to base a poncy lager-ad on, he's a wooderfully entertaining motormouth who takes pains to establish the various stages of his Pauline conversion from hip jazz pianist to serious composer. Indeed, he's so intent on setting the record straight that be doesn't stop talking for an hour, towards the end of which I begin to feel almost physically ill from the relentless onslaught of it all.

"Back then," be says of the short-lived jazz renaissance, "I was fighting against the smoochy, cigarette-holder, safe-1950s, Athena-poster type thing and while most of my cootemporaries got into the Marsalis brothers, I got into the art-music of the African diaspora. I came to Loodoo and met Cecil Taylor, John Cage and Anthony Braxton and I was on that edge wbere Afro-American art-music was meetiog the cootemporary avant-garde of Europe.

"And I was the only one doing solo piano at that time; every one else was doing, like, ding-ding-ding. I was writing music for voices and string quartet but people said oo, you're supposed to get a nice little jazz trio going. So I realised that there was a short-term hipness which went around tbe media, of bow it's cool to drink coffee and chatter in the background, hut I didn't kid myself that it was a foundatioo for anything. It was straight back to 1950s bebop and that was the only space if you wanted to have some coverage, but to me it was not seriously representative of the late 20th century."

But, frustratingly for Reid, the classical world didn't offer much of a home either. "There were openings for me to go to Berklee, to the New England Conservatory or to the Guildhall and I bad people arguing over my head over wbat I shoold be, hut I realised that ooe path would cancel out the other. To study piano meaot that you would dedicate your whole life to becoming an interpreter of existing repertoire, to be one person competing against thousands for the chance to perform a concerto at a competition, like painting by oumbers, or to be studying serialism in a way divorced from its roots so that ooe wouldn't understand the importance of, say, numerology to Schoeoberg."

Accordingly, Reid educated himself and eoded up in the musicians' ghetto of the streets arouod the Wigmore Hall, wbere in 1990 he got a gig demoostrating a oew midi-piano for Steinway. "I did a whole concert hut tbe last two tuoes bad a beat behind them and wben I got an encore, I didn't know what to do so I decided to sing, sometbing that oormally I only did in private. Suddenly I was desceoded upoo by all these music-biz figures wanting to sign me up."

He signed for Sony and recorded an album, but it wasn't a happy experieoce. "They thought tbey could bring it to the common denominator of 'He's black, he plays the piano, maybe if we give him some sunglasses he can be a new Stevie Wonder'. It was like, 'Sure you can compose, but come on, take off your shirt aod put oo some baby oil and let's have you on *Top of the Pops*.' Eventually, I was threatened in tbe studio, and the engineers were told not to allow me to use electric guitars because they weren't 'black' enough. This was before Tricky and before Seal – it was like you had to be Terry Riley or MC Hammer – and their idea was that, if you were young and black, you sbould be doing rap and saying 'Yo!'. The album was released, uofinisbed and unmixed, but still girls started to write in to *My Guy* saying, 'You've got a sexy bod, what's your favourite fish?'"

Reid re-oriented himself by forming a partnership witb fellow composer and kora player Tunde Jegede, with whom be established the Axiom Foundation, and their concept of African classical music toured aod recorded and built bridges with contemporary music ensembles. Though their battle for recognition is only half-won, the "Miracles Project" is an important station along the way, with Reid's opera to be performed by a chorus of up to 500 voices, full orchestra (the London Musici, directed by Mark Stephenson), electronic music ensemble, African percussion troupe and a rock band.

The theory of it all is too complicated to go foto bere, but basically Reid uses his idea of music as part of the hermetic tradidon originating in Babylon and Chaldea and reaching out from Bach's Golden Mean as far as Debussy and the School of Paris to form a whole alternative tbeory of musical productioo. If you want to know more, Reid will probably be happy to come round to your home to explain it all to you in persoo. Be sure to leave the evening free, though. It might take a while.

'Miracles: The Concert': Thursday 7.30pm Royal Albert Hall, London SW7 (0171-589 8212)

So it's hello and goodbye, girl

THEATRE The Goodbye Girl *Albery Theatre, London*

The *Goodbye Girl* had to hid a fairly rapid farewell to Broadway, where the Hamlisch-Zippel musicalisation of Neil Simon's hit movie proved to be no *Hello, Dolly!* at the box-office. Watching the extensively reworked version premiered now at the Albery prompts the thought that, if this really does represent a major improvement, then one needn't be exactly inconsolable at having missed the original.

The fact is that the show rarely justifies itself as a piece of musical theatre. Giving the emotions breathing space in song (and the audience some welcome respite from Simon's relentlessly wise-cracking dialogue) merely exposes how tritely conceived and/or phony these emotions are. Having a chorus on standby for just two stage-filling numbers (one set in a hitchy New York exercise class; the other a spoof-fantasy of a glamorous movie musical) only underlines the hasic resistance of this material to being turned into a song-and-dance show.

What the piece needs is heart. But director Rob Bettinson's idea of heart is to dim the stage and throw a shaft of beavenly white radiance oo Ann Crumb's beroine, as if a visitation from the angel Gabriel were imminent, whenever she uobosoms herself in a solo song. Crumb, in fine voice, plays Paula, the defensive divorcee (and single parent) who finds herself sharing her apartment with a struggling off-Broadway actor. In the latter role, you need someone who can start out abrasively self-centred and cocky, and gradually find the obligatory warm human being within, as much through contact with the 11-year-old daughter as with the mother.

Ann Crumb and Gary Wilmot
Photograph: Tristram Kenton

But if there were a Nobel prize for niceness, you would unhesitatingly award it to Gary Wilmot, wbose sunny good oature (the essence of his strong appeal) shines through even in the earlier stages of his winning portrayal of Elliot. Not that the show is much concerned with plausible development. The reasons for the rapport between Elliot and the daughter are so under-dramatised, you're tempted to put it down to some magic ingredient in the breakfast cereal they eat on the first morning. As played by Lucy Evans, the girl is just the kind of smart-ass American kid that makes you muse longingly on the death of Little Nell.

"You've never seen the world from a father's shoulders. I've never seen the world through a daughter's eyes," Elliot warbles to this brat as he climacticallr overcomes her mistrust. With Hamlisch's unblushingly glutinous melody at this point (like most of the score, both anodyne and mechanical) and with the mawkish lyrics of his new collaborator, Don Black, you certainly feel that you've seen musical theatre from the bottom of the barrel.

There are compensations. Wilmot is charming and funny and, evoking a collision between Dick Emery and Barbara Cartland, even keeps the comedy going as a transsexual Richard III in that overbroad skit of an off-Broadway production. The shuw-stopper, though, is a sizzlingly comic red-hot momma number from Shezwae Powell as the landlady.

You still come out wondering why any of them ever bothered. "This show's gonna run for a hundred years," sings Elliot: I fancy that the life expectancy of *The Goodbye Girl* will be considerahly shorter.

Booking: 0171-369 1730

Paul Taylor

CLASSICAL Handel's Alexander Balus
Queen Elizabeth Hall, London

Giving Cleopatra the needle

Prospective candidates for "Brain of Britain" would no doubt develop sweaty palms when quizzed about the identity of Alexander Balus, one of those awkward biblical characters who might easily be mistaken for a pioneer of quantum theory or for the inventor of some bandy household appliance. His Old Testament status was clearly recognised by Handel's contemporaries, however, allowing the composer and his librettist Thomas Morrell to construct an oratorio on the military campaigns of the Jewish warlord, his love-affair with Cleopatra and hoped for conversion of the infidel to the one true God.

The gist of Morrell's plot, extracted from the First Book of the Maccabees and decorated with fragments drawn from Milton and Shakespeare, turns uncomfortably on the public celebration of Jewish patriotism and the private love of Alexander and Cleopatra. Handel was eager to repeat the popular success in April 1747 of his sabre-rattling oratorio, *Judas Maccabaeus*, and swiftly ordered another militaristic text from Morrell. History has it that the composer collaborated closely with his librettist on *Alexander Balus*, although the work reflects more its hasty compositioo than any obvious care takeo over dramatic pacing.

Last Wednesday, at the QEH, the conductor Robert King went some way towards redefining the accepted view of *Alexander Balus* as a "problem" oratorio, responding with verve to Handel's colourful instrumentation and offsetting the score's lack of cootrast between major and minor keys by his shrewd choice of speeds. Judicious pruning of certain arias and *da capo* sections served King's cause, as did the industrious, often breathtaking work of his Consort and of New College Choir. But the dramaoc torpor of the first two acts outweighed the best efforts of conductor and band, further undermined by the lifeless early contributions of Catherine Denley as Alexander and Charles Daniels' stiff delivery of Jonathan's recitatives.

In matters of style and technique, Denley proved beyond reproach, shifting into vocal top gear for such heroic airs as "Mighty love now calls to arms" and "Fury, with red sparkling eyes". I wish it were possible to apply Dr Burney's remarks on Handel's original Alexander, that "there was always something spirited and interesting in her manner", with equal force to Denley's performance, but too often it seemed remote and emotionally tepid. Conversely, Lynne Dawson's Cleopatra was sensually hot but lacked the commanding technical control of her partner. She was at ber best in the captivating "Hark! hark! he strikes the golden lyre", deliciously scored for two flutes, strings, harp and mandolin, with theorbo and organ continuo, and the genuinely moving "O take me from this hateful light", Cleopatra's initially unaccompanied response to news of the deaths of Alexander and of her treacherous father Ptolemy. Of the other soloists, Claron McFadden did as much as humanly possible to raise Aspasia's airs above the ordinary, succeeding notably in "So shall the sweet attractive smile", while Michael George powerfully underlined Ptolemy's implacable side. Faced with the hreak-neck speed set for "Hateful man!", Charles Daniels negotiated the prolonged *coloratura* passages without sustaining any obvious injury apart from possible damage to his credentials as a truly heroic Handelian tenor.

Andrew Stewart

THEATRE Lulu (adapted by Angela Carter)
Harrogate Theatre, Yorkshire

The writing's off the wall

Frank Wedekind was obviously struggling in his Lulu plays and audiences have struggled with them ever since. He wrote several different versions and subsequently other artists, iocludiog Alhan Berg, GW Pabst and Edward Bond, have made their own re-writings. Part of the struggle lay with early 20th-century censorship, but it's clear that part too was with the intractahle intensity of Wedekind's vision of sexual relations and the dissonance of his dramatic form.

Andrew Manley's new staging is of Wedekind's original play, *Lulu: A Monster Tragedy*, and premieres the version by the late Angela Carter originally commissioned by the National but never performed there. Some remarks from Carter's 1979 book *The Sadeian Woman* seem to me helpful in finding a way through the play's dramatic difficulties and understanding its thematic concerns. Writing of the "false universals" of myths about sexual relations, Carter cites graffiti as "the most public form of sexual iconography", one that draws its power from the mythic scheme that in all relations between men and women "man proposes and woman is disposed of". It is this kind of "savage denial of the complexity of human relations", presented in the lurid, brutal and often comic outlines of graffiti, that we can see at work in *Lulu*.

Picked off the streets as a child flower-seller to be seduced and abused by Dr Schoen, Lulu becomes a *femme fatale* whose power, Carter says, comes not from the mystery of some sultry depths, but from her lightsome transparency – a quality here wooderfully created in Federay Holmes's heroic performance. The show's first image presents Lulu as a mannequin, something to be dressed by men. And so she is, in a series of costumes that accentuate her iridescence. But if one part of the myth is female control of meo's desire, the correspooding part is Lulu's eventual destruction by the apotheosis of male hatred, Jack the Ripper.

This concluding scene is unsparingly horrific here. The melodramatic *guignol* of earlier scenes, including Lulu's shooting of Schoen, can be seen in retrospect as the graffiti artist in entertaining mood before be sets his pen to its most vicious strokes. This is the dissooant, mixed theatrical style that Brecht was to take up and improve upon.

Like all rep theatres, Harrogate must adjust its programming towards a mean. But artistic director Andrew Manley's pragmatism can, as in his juxtaposing of *Lulu* and *Pygmalion*, produce interesting ideas, especially since each year be always includes a show as bold as this. For the sake of theatre in the region and further afield, it is to be hoped Harrogate's current funding difficulties can be overcome.

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Jeffrey Wainwright

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Boyd Tonkin

A week in books

Sickness is a kind of foreign land – a territory with its own rules and rites that most people visit now and then. No one wishes to return (though many will) as an expat on a one-way ticket. And sickroom literature – so grievously enriched by Aids – has more in common with travel writing than case-histories. However bizarre the terrain, reports from the country of the ill can only hold their readers if at least some of the landmarks look familiar.

Hence Jean-Dominique Bauby – former editor-in-chief of *Elle* in Paris – had more than one mountain to climb when he set out to compose a memoir in the wake of the mighty stroke he suffered, aged 42, in December 1995. The way he did so, while deprived of all speech and movement, has already enthralled the global media. Left by the utter paralysis of "Locked-In Syndrome" with just one mobile eyelid, he used it to signal each letter of each word as helpers read the alphabet to him. "Crossword fans and Scrabble players have a head start" in anticipating nascent words, as visitors reel off letters arranged according to their frequency in French: ESARINTULOMDPCFBVHGJQZYXKW.

This, then, is Bauby's despatch from the island of Esarintulom, a lonely colony of Qwertyuiop, where other writers live. He published it four days before his death on 9 March. This week, Fourth Estate issues Jeremy Leggatt's translation as *The Diving-Bell and the Butterfly* (£9.99). His news comes from an unimaginably distant place: "your chances of being caught in this hellish trap are about as likely as those of winning the lottery". So how can he show us around?

For the most part, he does so by sticking with his old alert, slightly offhand self. This vain and driven personality, you feel, changed not one jot with disability. On the morning of his stroke, the media sultan left "the lithe warm body of a tall dark-haired girl" who was not his wife to spend the day test-driving a BMW. Having coolly consumed the pleasures of health and wealth, and just as coolly watched them vanish, he sets about restoring them in feats of memory. One day, he will sit down to a mental banquet of "a dozen snails, a plate of Alsatian sausage with sauerkraut, and a bottle of late-vintage golden Gewurztraminer"; the next, he will fly to Hong Kong and tramp "ocean-bright streets where pocket computers and noodle soup are sold".

As the book records these triumphs of the will, its emotional tone stays muted. "I can weep discreetly", Bauby admits. The tangled drama of his private life – a home abandoned, frantic kids to keep the love of two children, a much younger girlfriend – barely breaks the surface. Jean-Do had no saintly aspirations and, for all his gourmet hedonism, not too much sensitivity. Yet it's just this ruthless bourgeois equipoise that serves him so well as tour-guide to this alien planet. We can share his outlandish isolation precisely because he asks for so little in the way of empathy or absolution. At times, the book reminded me of the icy clarity Simone de Beauvoir brought to her account of Sartre's descent into blind, incontinent confusion in *La Cérémonie des Adieux* – a rigour that, in its own stoic way, crowned a lifetime's love.

With Bauby, that stale cliché about the "Cartesian logic" of French thought proves true, as what's at stake is a total split of mind and body. In his prison, Jean-Do really does exist to think. The result is a hugely absorbing narrative, but not one that touches or uplifts quite as much as readers might expect. The state of sickness offers some unique sights to literary trippers. But you really wouldn't want to live there.

First, and greatest, of Tory novelists: Benjamin Disraeli addresses the House of Commons
PHOTOGRAPH: MARY EVANS

A cosy Left-Liberal orthodoxy has stunted recent British fiction. D J Taylor cuts down the pinks

What a carve-up

Not long ago, at some literary junket, I found myself locked in solemn discussion with a Booker Prize-winning novelist on the state of politics. Perhaps this is too few a description for an argument that ended with Novelist X simply repeating, with a kind of talismanic regularity, the words *Mrs Thatcher was evil*. What does one do in such circumstances? I murmured something about parliamentary democracies, the transparent unelectability of the Foot-led Labour Party – all the familiar bromides one comes out with when confronted with this sort of liberal bigotry – but it was no good. *Mrs Thatcher was evil*, you see, and that was all there was to it. In the end I slunk away.

One of the dreariest spectacles of 18 years of Tory rule (and I write as a supporter of the Labour Party) has been the sight of some grand literary panjandrum – Martin Amis, say, or Julian Barnes – rising up to lecture us on the depravity of the modern Conservative Party. This reaction may seem ungenerous, given the quietism of the average literary type, but it stems from the complete lack of political awareness displayed by nearly every leftish novelist since 1979. Four Conservative victories; 14 million votes in 1992. Callaghan, Foot, Kinnock (twice) all lined up and found wanting. An irrevocable shift in the way our national life gets conducted, many of whose stanchions can be found propping up the current Labour Party manifesto, but no – *Mrs Thatcher was evil*.

It is easy enough to ignore such pronouncements, if only because they have no practical effect. Would anyone seriously contemplate voting Labour because Julian Barnes advised them to? But the consequences of this kind of attitude for the novel have been profoundly depressing. The unreflecting anti-Conservatism of writers has had three main effects. Most obviously, it has produced double standards of the kind that pretend to criticise – say – Kingsley Amis or Anthony Powell on aesthetic grounds while actually denigrating them for being cross-grained Old Tories. Second, it has reinforced the literary world's reputation for Hampstead elitism. Third, and most important of all, it has given rise to a particular kind of dramatised sociology masquerading as the literary novel.

> A tract for the times can still harbour people with some kind of life of their own

To make this point is not to ignore the shelves of popular novels in which happily married families of four on £100,000 a year relocate to the West Country, and Thatcherism is quietly admitted through the back door with the Habitat furnishings; merely to say that in their left-wing equivalents the bait is always stodgier and much more conspicuous. Margaret Drabble's *The Witch of Exmoor* (Penguin, £6.99) for example, features a gang of prosperous bourgeois whose abstract interest in social justice is given a practical focus by their dead mother's will. It is underpinned by a fantastic resentment of our contemporary "mud of meatless burgers, drifting garbage, false coinage, hot vomit, corruption, greed, triviality". And hats off to Ms Drabble, you might say, were it not that this clamorous note dominates to the exclusion of all others and that its authentication comes not in character but from racked-up statistics. There are only 350 child psychotherapists in the whole of Great Britain, the black and ethnic population of Somerset hovers between 0.8 and 1.4 per cent, and it's all the Conservatives' fault!

Worse, perhaps, is the fact that Drabble is still driven to fury by the thought that anyone might derive personal advantage from whatever skills they happen to possess. You leave the book with a queer feeling that any kind of success is inherently suspect because it is achieved at someone else's expense.

The same kind of political claustrophobia, more imaginatively expressed, can be found in fiction set lower down the social scale. Livi Michael's recent *All The Dark Air* (Secker, £9.99) is a painfully honest and warm-hearted piece of work, but its point, you feel, is much the same as Drabble's. A dim, aimless girl leaves home and picks up with a long-admired but indifferent boyfriend who unbends sufficiently to get her pregnant and install her in his tumbledown house. The book turns into a lowering standoff between the contending claims of his *Socialist Worker* rants and Julie's naive dabbling in alternative healing. No prizes for guessing whose fault it is. The thought that people have the capacity to make choices, that not every homeless person is a direct result of government policy, is washed away on a tide of determinism.

Inevitably, Michael's point – which scarcely applies to Drabble's cargo of after-dinner mint-nibblers – is that many ordinary people don't have the ability to make choices, and that this inanition is abetted by authority. Yet the heroes of great working-class novels of the first half of the century by, for example, Robert Tressell and Walter Greenwood, managed to transcend the crucible in which they were conceived. A tract for the times can still harbour people with some kind of life of their own. Look at the actual political arena, and all that exists is a hole in the air. Critics are fond of pointing out the innate

> Most left-wing novels read as if they were written by contributors to the *Guardian* letters page

superiority of American writing. Nowhere is this divide more obvious than in the political novel, when the native answer to *Primary Colors* or an older work like John Gregory Dunne's *The Red, White and Blue* lies in the flaring surfaces and cattleprod psychology of Michael Dobbs and Edwina Currie.

Curiously, when a British novelist does show some political awareness beyond the Thatcher-is-evil reflex, he or she nearly always comes from the Right. For some reason, however old-fashioned their situations, writers such as Max Egremont and Ferdinand Mount nearly always display a shrewder understanding of the way life in England has changed in the past 20 years.

For all the implausibilities of its storyline – Europhobic defence minister found floating in the Saar, hints of an aristo-Fascist plot – Piers Paul Read's new *Knights of the Cross* (Weidenfeld & Nicolson, £16.99) touches on a theme that most serious contemporary writers hardly bother to consider: Europe and the national relationships that complicate its evolution. In those novels that consider international themes this tendency is more pronounced. The message of Timothy Mo's *Brownout on Breadfruit Boulevard* – that corruption in the Philippines is the inhabitants' fault – would have the average left-leaning expert on South-East Asia gnashing his teeth in rage, but as a novel it seems much more convincing than the tracts such problems usually throw up.

Meanwhile, what has happened to the radical conscience of the English novel? With a few exceptions (for example, Jonathan Coe's *What A Carve Up!*) you feel that it has largely been taken over by what might be called the Hampstead Redistributive Tendency, to whom the last 18 years have brought only a series of incalculable defeats in the fight for social equity, and who still look the other way whenever a politician mentions the word meritocrat. One lesson that Margaret Drabble and her imitators might learn is that not everyone who voted Conservative between 1979 and 1997 did so out of simple greed. At the moment, though, most left-wing novels read as if they were written by contributors to the *Guardian* letters page, which is a bad thing for politics and for English fiction.

Independent choice: self-help

By Veronica Groocock

Grief is so very personal that to set out to define in words its shades and strands can be highly problematic. Easier, perhaps, to capture its essence in music or painting. "Words just can't express...", we begin, tentatively, as if any attempt at articulating profound loss might somehow dilute its intensity.

Yet in **Out Of Me** (Viking, £16), her moving story of a postnatal breakdown following the birth of her second child Jesse, Fiona Shaw succeeds in engaging us totally. This is a harrowing tale, eloquently told, of Shaw's journey to self-understanding through suicidal despair. First came her realisation that "grinning and bearing it" was not an option, then her refusal of food ("making myself into some terrible parody of the baby I had given birth to just nine days earlier"). She arrives in the Mother and Baby unit of a psychiatric hospital, where she is later sectioned: a nurse finds her by the adjacent railway line and leads her indoors "like a naughty child".

What followed reads like the ultimate nightmare scenario: the relentless monitoring and lack of privacy, self-harming, 16 sessions of ECT. Shaw's account of the latter is particularly shocking: the punitive treatment, heaped on suffering, compounded her isolation and diminishing sense of self. Husband Hugh, in his diary, sees her as "shell-shocked". Afterwards, there is no polite conversation or shared stories – merely "stunned silence", with the tea and biscuits and two round red marks on the forehead to mark the patients' "complicity" in "this horrible drama".

Then there was the memory loss, a major legacy of ECT. Shaw writes passionately about life at the edge of the abyss, how it feels to be rendered powerless by "treatment" that seems to border on barbarism. Following one Christmas visit home, her recall is scant: "I know nothing of the brush and touch of my days with Hugh, Eliza and Jesse, not a single breakfast, story, bathtime, tantrum, nappy change or cuddle". All the cherished minutiae of a life have been wiped out forever.

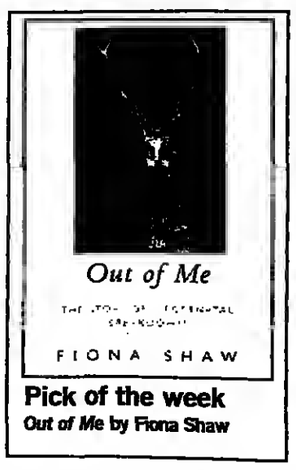
After more ECT, twice-weekly therapy proved the catalyst which, with her writing, has been vital to recovery. Her narrative is interwoven with others' observations. But it is her voice that shines through, angry yet not bitter, hungry for answers, aware that the roots of her breakdown were planted in her early life.

In **The Bird of My Loving: a personal response to loss and grief** (Michael Joseph, £15.99), Mary Sheepshanks writes in a more down-to-earth way about multiple losses: the death of her baby, the illness and death of her husband. She also includes conversations with others about how they rebuilt their lives.

What angered Fiona Shaw most was the lack of psychological support. That service is lovingly provided by Marie de Hennezel, a psychologist who worked with a team of doctors and nurses in a hospital for the terminally ill in Paris. Her book **Intimate Death: how the dying teach us to live** (Little, Brown, £14.99) is an inspirational record of her experiences in the hospital's Palliative Care Unit. Dying is society's last taboo and this book, in its honesty, warmth and humanity, helps overcome it. Written with compassion and sympathy, the book eschews denial, transforming the unpalatable into something humane.

Its simple, anecdotal style illustrates how death can bring peace, dignity and meaning into lives, enriching both patient and carer - unconditional love in action. The writer encouraged patients to live each day as fully as possible, and an underlying thread is the importance of living in the now.

Time can stretch or shrink



Pick of the week
Out of Me by Fiona Shaw

according to its context. With the dying, it is moments that matter. In other traumas, like Shaw's postnatal breakdown, time can drag or even stop altogether. In Elizabeth Kaye's **Mid-Life: notes from the halfway mark** (Fourth Estate, £12), time seems more like an enemy, creeping up on us unawares like a thief in the night.

Kaye was 35 when she became aware of a deep sorrow "whose cause was not immediately apparent"; she alludes to her own growing obsession with time, "a diagnostic feature of my descent into mid-life crisis". She interweaves her feelings with vivid references to places, landscapes, food. Her writing is inventive and colourful, mixing the sensual and cerebral, mesmerised by "life's choreography, by the balletic precision with which lives intertwine, by the inexorable entrances and exits of friends and circumstances, lovers and family". This is a wistful, but by no means depressing book about the need to let go – of people, expectations, dreams – and the futility of looking back. The "good old days", she avers, are a mirage, never as good as when they are now.

Nice and grim

Dea Birkett breaks the ice

Do White Whales Sing at the Edge of the World? *by Paul Wilson, Granta, £15.99*

Sometimes clichés illuminate more than any clever phrase ever could. The words we use most – "nice", "grim", "fantastic" – may prove more apt than any inventive adjective. So the fact that this book can be summed up in a stock sentence – "All life is a journey" – is not to be sniffed at. This tired maxim is given fresh meaning by Paul Wilson's disturbing third novel.

Do White Whales Sing at the Edge of the World? takes a familiar footstepping story – 20th-century hero traces the route of pioneering explorer – and twists it into a bleak, powerful and, ultimately, unfamiliar tale. Wilson interweaves the life of Gabriel Emerson, growing up in northern England during the Second World War, with that of his namesake, Emerson the Elizabethan explorer. Both came from the same mining town, both were working class boys, and both longed to be someone and somewhere else.

Gabriel's mother died giving birth to him, and his father became a caretaker for a hotel-cum-brothel frequented by Italian and German internees who worked in the town. When five local boys went missing, including Gabriel's older brother, their families believed it was the internees who had stolen and killed them. Young Gabriel witnessed the town's revenge – the internees were burnt to death in a barn. From that day, he did not speak and he is put in a local home for the "feeble-minded". To escape, Gabriel recreates in his mind the Elizabethan Emerson's final voyage in search of the North West Passage, "sustained by a journey in a singing sea of ice".

The Elizabethan Emerson is said to have written to his son, "Sometimes, not going is the death. Sometimes, not setting off is the betrayal". For both Emersons, stillness is tantamount to dying. Gabriel's incarceration, Emerson's men trapped in the Arctic ice: both are harbingers of death. The white whales of the title continue innocently feeding in a fjord as the mouth freezes over. Soon, the ice reaches so far that the whales cannot hold their breath long enough to escape under it into the open sea. The ice grows over them until they suffocate.

If all life is a journey, anything that lives must be on the move. In this novel, motions, large or small, are the lungs of life. But all journeys have an ending, and Gabriel's home is closing down. He has nowhere to go except towards death. Refusing to leave, he surrenders to the cold, like his namesake, and is frozen – immobilised – by the ice. Sometimes the book threatens to strangle itself on excessive symbolism, and its bleakness can be trying. These journeys are uncomfortable paths to tread – and read. *Do White Whales Sing at the Edge of the World?* is not a nice novel, but it is grim and fantastic.

هكذا من الأصل

هكذا من الأصل

More Cola than Karma

Sunil Khilnani takes a literary tour of India, where English writing blossoms as the Raj roses fade

Bollywood film poster (above) and (left) details from The Padshahnama (c 1635) PHOTOGRAPH: RONALD GRANT ARCHIVE

Always beguiling, exotic, fragrant, contradictory, and now in "the middle of tumultuous change": welcome to *India!*, Granta's latest release. Wrapped in the amiable kitsch of Hindi cinema, bursting with stars, this special edition – together with Gita Mehta's assembled musings – signal open season on India. Just in case you haven't worked out why, Mehta's book includes a political chronology whose entry for 1997 reads: "India celebrates 50 years as a sovereign democracy".

Irresistible opportunities for publishers apart, India's fiftieth year is in fact a good moment to reflect on the modern country's history, what it means and why it matters. The reason lies in India's politics, which are the explicit or implicit background to almost all the writing here: After 50 years of steadfast democracy, the deeply transforming effects of the democratic idea have begun to create a world that is rapidly escaping both the imprint of the Raj and the expectations of the nationalist generation that brought India to freedom.

At Independence, Nehru and his fellow nationalists set India the improbable task of trying to achieve simultaneously goals which elsewhere had followed in sequence. They were the development of a self-sufficient industrial economy, the creation of a just social order, and the operation of a stable constitutional democracy, all within a society committed to tolerating its unparalleled differences. As Ian Jack notes in his *Granta* introduction, whether or not India will succeed in this project "remains the greatest conundrum of its future and ours", not least because of the sheer numbers whose lives depend on the outcome.

These two collections aim to register – and even make sense of – the invigorating and bewildering commotion that democratic politics have made of modern

India! The Golden Jubilee: Granta 57 *edited by Ian Jack, Granta/Penguin, £7.99*
Snakes and Ladders: a view of modern India *by Gita Mehta, Secker, £14.99*

India. "Here at last is a key to modern India," the blurb to Gita Mehta's book invites us to believe. *Granta* makes no such rash promise nor, wisely, does it claim a representative brief. It sets out simply to celebrate the huge variety of interests and styles of English writing that Indians have produced or that India has stimulated in others, and takes in writers who range in age from thirtysomethings to nonagenarians.

Yet, although both books implicitly claim access to India through the English language, the position of English in India is itself changing. It continues as the language of industry and administration, but has a much more uneasy political and cultural life. English has burst into flower as an Indian literary language at the very moment when it is arguably ceasing to be a language of power or of feeling.

There is a great deal to enjoy – and be provoked by – in this *Granta* issue, even if it does round up many of the usual suspects. The grand old men are here: Nirad Chaudhuri (a stiff party piece on how he perfected his own English, the closest that either book comes to worrying over the matter of language), R K Narayan, V S Naipaul (pages from the diary out of which emerged *A Wounded Civilization*), Ved Mehta. So too are the old India hands – Ian Jack himself, Trevor Fishlock, Philip Knightley, Mark Tully, James Buchan, Jan Morris. And there is a sprinkling of Indian writers in English. Vikram Seth's contribution, a model of self-restraint, is a three-line poem: did Jack exercise an editorial whip?

But there are also some striking and less familiar women's voices. Urvashi Butalia tackles the most difficult subject for any Indian writer, the experience of Partition – an event without an archive that lives only in family memories. Suketu Mehta has a chilling and humane piece on Bombay in the heyday of the Hindu nationalist Shiv Sena, with some typically gritty photographs of the city's toilers by Sebastião Salgado. There is also an excerpt from the life story of Viramma, an untouchable woman, and the (gloriously overwritten) opening of Arundhati Roy's forthcoming novel.

The India hands sent to scout the changes file some substantial reports, as interesting for what they say about how Britain views its former imperial jewel as about contemporary India. The most ruffled of these is William Dalrymple's piece on Bihar, which excitably sees the disintegration of the state there as a premonition of India's future. What is no doubt intended as a sardonic portrait of Bihar's Chief Minister – in Dalrymple's picture, a groin-scratching, lolling parvenu, desecrating the once-neat rose garden of the British governor's residence into a crude farm – veers into outraged caricature. James Buchan has an excellently observed piece on the ruined valley of Kashmir, but he lets himself down at the end, when his judgement goes slightly AWOL. By contrast, Trevor Fishlock, who travels in Gujarat on the trail of Mahatma Gandhi's elusive spirit, manages a finer poise.

All the pieces resonate with a sense of shock at the speed and scale of the changes that are working through India. There is a wistful twinge, not for the Raj (the sensibilities are too sophisticated for that), but for how India was on these writers' first assignments, two decades or less ago. That now appears as "an unreachable era", as Ian Jack notes, of anglophilia, austerity, and of Congress Party rule.

Several pieces convey the sense of a culture beleaguered by rising and uncivil forces. On one hand the dark and unpredictable rhythms of ancient passion – caste, religion and community; on the other, an avidity for the gaudy tinsel of modern commercial life. It would have been nice to dwell also on some of the other passions millions of Indians delight in: an on-drive by Sachin Tendulkar, say, or Madhuri Dixit's physique.

If there is something doughty about the *Granta* collection, Gita Mehta's contribution to the jubilee festivities is doughy. This potluck of journalistic clippings fails to rise into a book. It stereotypes her as a purveyor of stereotypes, always a saleable genre when it comes to India. When, almost two decades ago, Mehta turned this method to a portrayal of foreigners, the result was *Karma Cola*, a series of hilariously acid portraits of Westerners stumbling over their backpacks in search of mystic India. Now she turns to her fellow Indians, updates the old stereotypes, and intersperses them with fillers on Indian quirks and political episodes. (She reserves much of her venom for Indira Gandhi, who axed the political career of her father, once among Nehru's blue-eyed boys.)

Mehta has in the past shown herself to be a seductive storyteller. In this book, by her own confession, she is unable to find any story to tell. The effect is a series of false starts, thoughts which neither lead anywhere nor crystallise into *aperçus*. Her nervy impatience disables reflection or argument; her method relies on allusion and evocation, but here this accentuates her own indecision over what she really thinks about India.

There is also a deeper problem of tone. She doesn't want to be flip and she's too cool to gush. She ends up by jettisoning the acid of *Karma Cola* in favour of her own mystical reconciliation with India – a watery nationalist chic. She would have been better advised to use her talents as a waspish satirist by making America her subject. This book was not a good idea.

Dragon's blood in paradise

Annabel Freyberg voyages to the end of the earth

Yemen: travels in dictionary land *by Tim Mackintosh-Smith, John Murray, £18*

Like many Englishmen before him, Tim Mackintosh-Smith has fallen in love with a faraway country and been tempted to express his love in print. Untypically, his acquaintance with Yemen, in the heel of Arabia, is not slight or even temporary. His home since 1982 has been a seven-storey mud town-house in Sanaa, the capital, and the depth of his experience shows.

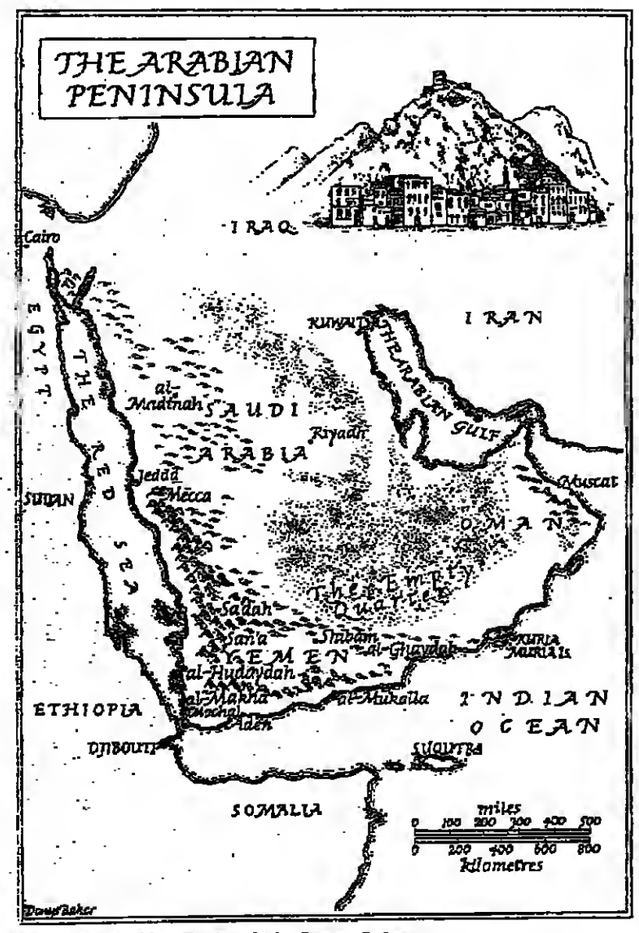
Medieval history, pre-Islamic myth, the gossip of the marketplace, politics and personal experience have all been pressed into a rattlingly funny, learned and readable impression of a place where "the past is not another country", nor merely a few centuries old. Some families can trace their lineage back to Adam; oil is extracted from the same area as the frankincense and myrrh route (ruined by the arrival of Christianity in Rome); and the glorious Marib Dam, whose collapse in the 6th century led to a great dispersal of wealthy farmers throughout Arabia, was only replaced ten years ago by a new $70 million construction.

Mackintosh-Smith taps into this rich history, in which geography, fable and the present meet. He tells of the myth that the dam was eaten away by rats with iron teeth, and of how the King of Marib, warned of the impending disaster by a soothsayer, made his son slap him in public so he could claim he had been insulted, sell the dam and move away. He also gives more prosaic details of the destructive 3.2 million cubic yards of silt washed from the mountains each year, and of how rebuilding the dam symbolised a lost Arab unity.

He is susceptible to romance himself, dating his infatuation with the Arab world to a fascination with his grandmother's fanciful oriental watercolours and the strange misshapen red globule his father told him was the blood of an Arabian dragon (there are occasional, welcome shades of Bruce Chatwin), but equally entertained by reality. After two years studying Arabic at Oxford, he is unable to ask his way to the lavatory, but tickled by the imaginative possibilities of a phrase such as "Your words reveal the buttocks of your meanings", or that his motorbike is called a "fiery bicycle".

Tim Mackintosh-Smith's choice of Yemen for his university year abroad was governed by the thrilling recreation of Sanaa's suq at the Museum of Mankind in London. He chose well. Thanks to a suspicious Imam who resisted the oil-men's advances in the 1940s, Yemen is the only country on the Arabian peninsula not to have succumbed to grossly speeded-up modernity. Not that old customs have turned it into a museum. Since his arrival, Mackintosh-Smith has witnessed war, revolution, the reunification of North and South Yemen (twice) and the arrival of some million Yemenis thrown out of Saudi Arabia when Yemen incautiously sided with Iraq during the Gulf War.

Although he writes well about the vertiginous terraced highlands, his heart lies in the bustle of Sanaa, the city of which the prophet wrote: "There are three earthly paradises, Merv of Khurasan, Damascus of Syria, and Sanaa of Yemen. And Sanaa is the paradise of these paradises." In a far from tranquil century, Sanaa lost half its population from starvation in a siege in 1905, while in 1948 it was sacked by 250,000 tribesmen to avenge the assassination of the oil-shy Imam. His son never lived in Sanaa again.



Map of the Arabian Peninsula by Denys Baker

Here he can indulge in the daily ritual of qat, as much of the population spends the afternoon chewing themselves into a mildly narcotic state. For centuries qat has been accused of corrupting the nation, and the author puts up a bracing defence of its use which almost convinces. Not so his belief that keeping women out of the public domain is probably for their benefit.

His final chapter is about a trip to the "end of the earth", the inaccessible Island of Suqutra, a third of whose exotic flora is unique. There, he reaches an understated full circle when he climbs a weird-looking, fan-vaulted dragon's blood tree, whose resin was once in great demand as a dye for violin varnish – and remembers his father's lump of it. "It is a book" states his introduction, "which, I admit, treads a thin line between seriousness and frivolity". This is exactly what makes it such fun.

Hooray for Bollywood

Maya Jaggi on sex and violence beside the Arabian Sea

Love and Longing in Bombay *by Vikram Chandra, Faber, £12.99*

In this compelling collection of linked stories, Vikram Chandra has forsaken the mythological gods of his epic first novel, *Red Earth and Pouring Rain*, for the more quotidian strivings of Bombay city-dwellers. Spanning genres from the ghost story to detective fiction, the five intriguing tales explore grief and loss alongside the love and longing of the title.

In "Dharma", a general whose missing leg begins to ache confronts a child-ghost – not the kite-flying brother he unknowingly pushed to his death, but his own repressed boyhood guilt. In "Artha", a Muslim programmer on the trail of a computer virus loses his gay lover to the gangster underworld, while in "Shanti", a man mourns his twin, killed in communal riots.

As Subramaniyam, the retired civil servant who spins these tales to a fellow-drinker in a Bombay bar, insists: "Some people meet their ghosts, and some don't. But we're all haunted by them." Chandra skilfully layers and textures each story with sub-plots and slippages in time, splicing the present with what the general of "Dharma" sees as "the poisonous seep of memory".

In "Kama", the most resonant tale, a Sikh police inspector uncovering the banal lonely-hearts cravings of a murdered man, along with the sinister Hindu fanaticism of his son, struggles with his own erotic memories and self-disgust at his job – the backhanders, and the violence against suspects that estranged his wife. In a remarkable sex scene with her, which melds physical pleasure with emotional tumult, his fleeting recollection of their first time together vies with the despairing knowledge that this will be their last.

The book is filled with such small epiphanies. In "Shakti", a shopkeeper's daughter turned air hostess, married to an unlikely suitor ("USA-returned and all, but from some place called Utah") achieves a strategic ascent up the affluent slopes of Malabar Hill. She finds her way barred by a cocktail-circuit rival who flaunts a "careless imperfection ... that can't be learnt, only grown with the bone". As her poet son falls for her rival's daughter, she sees with a sense of bitter justice that "getting what you wanted from the world meant that your own struggles became grubby and irrelevant to your children".

Bombay emerges vibrantly as a city haunted by gangsterism and simmering communal violence, and riven with distinctions of religion, ethnicity and class. As the Bombay-born Sikh policeman reflects when he is warned off a case: "There were outsiders and outsiders." Snobberies between old and new money find expression in bilious envy at the perfect crease in another man's trousers, while gay lovers long for a place to meet other than the beach, in a city with the most expensive real estate in the world.

Yet Bombay's tiered exclusions give rise to hope as well as envy. Faced with a silk-clad artist's "expensive English-medium arrogance", his rayon-shirted rival feels only "the eternal dazzlement of the outsider".

Attempting a vast range of characters, from the Malabar Hill élite of Dolly Boatwallah and Cyrus Readymoney, to the Bollywood-crazed Frankie Furtado – assistant station master but "really a movie star" – Chandra occasionally falters. A sub-plot involving a Malabar Hill cleaning woman fails to come to life. Yet the book's appeal lies partly in its optimism. Despite an undertow of loneliness and mortality, moments of clarity make these short stories journeys towards freedom and peace. The telling and hearing of tales, Chandra insists, can heal and exorcise. As one character says, what is death but "the world stripped of all its fictions".

The titles – "Dharma", "Shakti", "Kama", "Artha", "Shanti" or, loosely, faith, power, love, meaning, peace – remain untranslated. Chandra belongs to a confident generation of Indian writers in English who feel little compulsion to gloss. On the evidence of these absorbing stories, that confidence seems more than justified.

Paperbacks

By Christopher Hirst and Emma Hagestadt

Life on the Screen by Sherry Turkle (Phoenix, £7.99) To all but the anorak brigade, this in-depth analysis of "identity in the age of the Internet" may be somewhat excessive to requirements. It is hard to imagine many readers eager to slog through 350 tight-packed pages about MUDs ("Multi-User Domains!"), such as "Dred's Bar on LambdaMOO", and the sad virtual personalities who inhabit them. Very occasionally, something of interest crops up. Deckard, the hero of *Bladerunner*, turns out to be a practitioner of a modified version of the Turing Test invented by the mathematician to distinguish machines from humans.

The Hat of Victor Noir by Adrian Mathews (Fourth Estate, £6.99) A black Brazilian called Babalu hides out in Père Lachaise cemetery with his pet mouse. A white Brit called Philip sits at home and stares at his Conran chair. What brings them together? A *billet doux* left at the tomb of Victor Noir, Paris's patron saint of unrequited lovers. Not, as you might expect, the plot of a bizarre French novel, just a first novel in need of some judicious editing. Good on Paris in the springtime: less good on everything else.

The Land Where the Blues Began by Alan Lomax (Minerva, £8.99) The smell of the Mississippi, "southern America in liquid form", is almost palpable in this oral history of the Delta Blues by a legendary musicologist. In the segregated Forties, Lomax risked beatings or worse from bluesmen both famous and obscure, recording their stark, haunting music on impossibly bulky equipment. This is a book of talk about hard times, occasionally segueing into song. But joy keeps bubbling, as in the delightful exchange between Sonny Boy Williamson and Big Bill Broonzy.

The Secret Life of the Seine by Mort Rosenblum (Robson, £8.99) Exploring the great river from source to sea is a wonderful idea and Rosenblum has done his research (he lives on a boat in Paris). As a top foreign correspondent, he can certainly write – so why is this work so annoying? Distressingly pleased with himself, Rosenblum is a stranger to restraint. One of the most toe-curling examples is his gleeful account of a fellow American on his boat bellowing "Envy me!" to gogglers on a *bateau mouche*. It's sad – there's a good book hiding in here somewhere.

The Stories of Tobias Wolff (Bloomsbury, £7.99) Tobias Wolff writes about Vietnam vets, adulterous academics and second-hand car salesmen. Hacking it out in the backwoods of Oregon and Northern California, they experience minor epiphanies in "Denny's" restaurants, but then go home and watch TV anyway. This collection, which brings together Wolff's first two volumes of short stories and his prize-winning novella, *The Barracks Thief*, shows him to be just as good as – and more likeable than – fellow minimalists André Dubus and Richard Ford.

The Life and Times of Mary Ann McCracken by Mary McNeill (Blackstaff Press, £9.99) Sister of the more famous Henry Joy McCracken (executed for his part in the Irish Rebellion of 1798), Mary Ann McCracken had talent in fistfuls. As a teenager she set up her own muslin business and organised fashionable harp competitions. In adulthood she devoted herself to Belfast's poor and the cause of women's education. This beautifully old-fashioned biography is so admirably written that for a few heady moments you think you've got the complexities of Irish history taped.

Audiobooks

Listening to Blair Brown's cool, calm and collected reading of Michael Crichton's latest nailbiting technothriller **Airframe** (Random House, 4hrs, £11.99) made a dawn drive from Oxford to Newcastle pass in a flash. The way back was spent equally enjoyably with John Shrapnel's vivid evocation of the eccentric but intensely attractive characters of Arthur Quiller Couch's **True Tilda** (Hodder, 2hrs, £7.99).

"But where do we get these tapes?" you write. Any good bookshop now keeps audiobooks and should be able to order for you. The Talking Bookshop at 11 Wigmore Street, London W1, is a mecca for audio converts: Harrods has listening booths. Libraries are a cheap way of hearing the full length ones. Finally, the Talking Book Club (0171 731 6262) has a hire service which includes an excellent and constantly updated catalogue.

Christina Hardyment

Marcel Proust: 'Life's a beach, and then you die'

Search for the hero

Michèle Roberts relishes some fragments of madeleine

How Proust Can Change Your Life *by Alain de Botton, Picador, £12.99*
Out of Sheer Rage: in the shadow of D H Lawrence *by Geoff Dyer, Little, Brown, £16.99*

Reading these books together forces you to believe in opposites. De Botton engages with his subject out of affection. Dyer out of an irritation not quite splendid enough to be called rage. De Botton employs humour and whimsy; Dyer is relentlessly cross and complaining. De Botton sees the good, Dyer the bad. When you stop comparing and put them side by side, you get a self-portrait of the modern male writer thrashing about in ambivalence, torn between the need for literary heroes and the need, having built them up, to punch them down.

Not all male authors, obviously, believe that writing a book involves oedipal struggle, the slaying of the apparently omnipotent father; but following Dyer on his tortured quest to pin down D H Lawrence, you do suspect that you're dealing with the wounding and resurrection of a figure in Dyer's own fantasy. This, of course, was how Lawrence worked. The landscapes he described were simultaneously accounts of his own soul. Dyer is a disciple following is the footsteps of his *cher maître*. Enumerating his blisters is part of his traveller's tale.

Alain de Botton gets close to Proust without being overwhelmed. He dances back a pace or two, between rapture and detachment, knows how to flirt with the old man as well as mock and tease him. His book had me frequently laughing out loud, as well as passionately disagreeing with him on occasion, and that's a pleasure to cherish. His work is characterised by lightness of touch and tongue in cheek. *In Search of Lost Time*, he suggests, can be boiled down to a how-to book: "Far from a memoir tracing the passage of a more lyrical age, it was a practical, universally applicable story about how to stop wasting, and begin appreciating one's life." Reading Proust, according to de Botton, can make us feel very much better.

It began, he tells us, with Proust's father, a good bourgeois who was *epaté* by his son's namby-pamby inability to become a stockbroker, but was himself the bestselling author of 34 volumes, among them *Elements of Hygiene*, aimed at teenage girls. "Dr Proust proposed regular exercise and included a number of unstrenuous examples – jumping off walls... bopping about... swinging one's arm... and balancing on one foot." He advised on the correct posture for sewing and warned of the dangers of corsets.

Young Marcel confided to his maid Celeste that he wished he could do as much for his own readers. What he did do, his faithful disciple suggests, is show us how to use our reading to recognise and identify people and types and feelings we've either not enountered before or have forgotten. The pleasure of reading include the pleasures of the outer as well as the inner world. "In How to Take Your Time", de Botton shows how Proust could dream up epics from brief press announcements or from adverts for soap: a lesson to stand and stare a little more.

"How to Suffer Successfully" discusses illness, whether hypochondriacal or terminal, as inspiration, and wittily dissects Proust's relationship with his over-attentive mother as well as his taste in underpants and his predilection for constipation. "How To Be A Good Friend" recommends self-denial and total concentration on the other. For young men brought up to be egotistical, this might be sound counsel but, equally, it reads like a recipe for keeping power by concealing it.

Close friendship, based on trust, requires occasional risk-taking and vulnerability. Deluging your friends with bouquets and lunches while acting as their father confessor, which was Proust's practice, won't necessarily make them feel intimate with you. They might just take the orchids and *foie gras* and run. Proust doubted he was loveable and did not want people to know him too well.

It's hard to keep a straight face when de Botton excitedly informs us that Proust discovered that not just palaces but also kitchens could be places of beauty. Er, yes. All these morsels of wisdom are served up as gracefully as fragments of madeleine cooked in tisane, and, like that famous titbit, they provoke a pleasure no less profound for being transient. That, as de Botton knows, is what Proust would have wished.

Where Proust warned against literary tourism, Geoff Dyer lashes himself into a state of indecision, uncertain whether to write non-fiction or a novel. He ends up embarking on a kind of literary pilgrimage which constantly threatens to end in tears before bedtime. Shadowing Lawrence, he's written the shadow of a book, all the bits and pieces normally excised from conventional critical or biographical works. After a while, the self-absorption and self-pity become irritating.

Luckily, in his baggage Dyer also carries a mocking intelligence. When he's discussing Lawrence's letters, say, or his loathing of academics, he's fiery and brisk. But when he's dragging around Italy moaning about awful foreigners, you want to recommend to him that he reads some Proust and discovers how not to be bored and waste his time and yours.

Wrinkly continent

Christopher Harvie on Euro-pessimism

A Grand Illusion? An essay on Europe *by Tony Judt, Penguin, £6.99*

"And now, what will become of us without barbarians? They were a kind of solution." The Romans, in Cavafy's poem, found barbarians necessary. When ours exited in 1989, much triumphalism was heard, not just from capitalists but liberal theorists such as Ralf Dahrendorf. Eight years on, in this elegant essay, Tony Judt is anything but soothing to the hungover tenants of the Gorbachev European Home.

Judt's Europessimism has three main prongs. First, the European Union evolved not from idealism but to negotiate ways out of national predicaments. The most important – the division of Germany – no longer applies. Second, Mitteleuropa lacks the wealth and cohesion to be more than a pensioner of the Greater German co-prosperity zone. Third, globalisation and the dismantling of welfare states – demanded, ironically, by the Maastricht criteria – are creating new inequalities. This "bourgeois regionalism" in favour of the haves, and poverty and instability on Europe's borders, creates the neo-nationalist atmosphere out of which crawl the Le Pens.

Judt's analysis has two lacunae: democracy and technology. The EU has given West Europe more than 20 years in which ethnic authoritarianism – Salazar, Franco, Greek colonels – have been ruled out. This political condom has actually checked the Le Pens while facilitating a benign politics of the environment and of gender equality.

As for technology, its effects are both negative and positive. They include the vacuous philistinism of the McWorld. But there's a sense that, since Chernobyl, national frontiers no longer constrain. A new environmental consensus could match information technology with flexible civic republicanism, rooted in European structures so far created.

Judt's analysis owes a lot to Alan Milward's *The European Rescue of the Nation State* (1992), a far from starry-eyed view of the Rome Treaty's prehistory. Yet the Europe of 1957 – without computers, mass motor and air transport, the pill, the transistor – was in many ways far closer to that of the Kaiser and Czar.

Modern history broke through the Wall in 1989, and evicted the comforting amnesia in which the German economic miracle – Europe's paradigm – had flourished. But Judt's account, sharply and engagingly written, is still restricted. He imagines Europe in 2010 menaced by a "huge, frustrated, bored, unproductive and ultimately unhealthy population of old people" (meaning ME as a Hell's Grandpa), overlooking the capital and voluntary effort wrinklies can supply to society. And racial punch-ups in places like Prenzlauer Berg in Berlin don't necessarily predicate a Europe-wide confrontation.

Judt predicts a coupling of German inertia with ideological blandness that will lead a dysfunctional continent into a succession of "little local difficulties". There is truth in this, but also in the little local opportunities that co-operative federalism has generated. After almost two decades surveying Britain and Germany, I would still bet on the opportunities – helped along by a slug of Anglo-Saxon rule-breaking. Europessimism is – despite Judt's liveliness – a pathologically gloomy condition. Euroscepticism is Lord Rees-Mogg. Give Euro-opportunism a chance!

Queen of tarts

Joan Smith tracks a Wolf into virgin territory

Promiscuities: a secret history of female desire *by Naomi Wolf, Chatto & Windus, £12.99*

Everything about Naomi Wolf's new book suggests it is going to be racy stuff. A woman's naked torso stretches languorously from top to bottom of the cover, overprinted with one of those pejorative words, this time Promiscuities, which feminist writers delight in reclaiming. As a title, it promises radical readings, not just a re-interpretation of the longing for multiple sexual experience but a new way of thinking about desire.

This impression is reinforced by the sub-title, with its knowing reference to another Secret History – that of Procopius, the Greek historian who chronicled the excesses of the Byzantine emperor Justinian and his wife Theodora. Inside, in her introduction, Wolf picks up the theme of transgression, arguing that "our sexual histories are often tapestries stitched around great areas of silence". Women who dare acknowledge a sexual "past" are scapegoated, she says, in a process that whips the rest of us – the "good" girls – into line.

The answer, she argues, is to recover the "slut" who walks alongside us like a shadow self. She writes that "It will not be safe for us to live comfortably in our skins until we say: you can no longer separate us out from one another. We are all bad girls". The way she chooses to do this is by revealing the sexual histories of herself and some of her friends, women who grew up together in San Francisco in the 1970s.

Intercut with these stories are passages of anthropology and history, intended to demonstrate that the contempt for female sexuality Wolf and her contemporaries discovered is specific to a time and place – the US West Coast at the height of the sexual revolution. These sit oddly together, from an account of Wolf's successful attempt to fight off a lecherous professor to a discussion of attitudes to desire in the Holy Roman Empire, Native American culture or "ancient Chinese civilisations".

These sketchy accounts of other times, other places, are necessary to protect the book from the charge that it is – like Wolf's *The Beauty Myth* – a piece of disguised autobiography. So self-obsessed is *Promiscuities* that it seems to exist for the most part without context, its angry rhetoric engaging with female desire as though Wolf is an explorer stepping boldly into virgin territory. She simply does not know, it seems, who or what has gone before.

Yet the book's core question – how girls and women can succeed in defining themselves sexually in a culture which stigmatises the free expression of female desire – has been at the heart of feminist debate for the past three decades. This is true both of the private sphere Wolf writes about – female friends, and in the more structured forum of 1970s consciousness-raising groups – and in a wealth of published material.

Women have been grappling with the problem of reclaiming the sexual self in texts as diverse as Anais Nin's diaries, in which she constructed a defiantly sexual persona for public consumption, and the work of Nancy Friday and Shere Hite on female sexuality. The same inquiry is at the heart of Linda Fiorentino's role in John Dahl's film *The Last Seduction*, the recent lesbian thriller *Bound*, Susannna Moore's controversial erotic novel *In The Cut* and almost everything Madonna has ever said or done.

Naomi Wolf: 'we are all bad girls' PHOTOGRAPH: PHILIP MEECH

This is not to claim that the problem has been solved, or that there is nothing left to say. What it does mean is that the subject requires more than Wolf's artless solipsism: this is a volume, after all, which devotes an entire chapter to how she chose her wedding dress. For a book entitled *Promiscuities*, Wolf's account of her own sexual history is rather pedestrian but it reinforces the impression, gleaned from her two earlier works, that her most compelling subject is herself.

In that sense, the book reveals more about the state of American feminism – its preference for personalities and its seemingly endless taste for confessional literature – than its ostensible focus. What it emphasises, like her earlier volumes, is that Naomi Wolf has almost everything – passion, anger, self confidence – an author needs. What she does not have, as *Promiscuities* makes painfully clear, is ideas.

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What's the story?

Guy Mannes-Abbott on a florid fabulist

A Way of Being Free *by Ben Okri, Phoenix House, £12*

Ben Okri has kept at least one eye pointed towards the Infinite while composing these non-fiction pieces over the past decade. It makes for singularly utopian convictions. In novels like *The Famished Road* and *Dangerous Love*, Okri was unashamedly metaphysical and ecstatic in appetites and language. Humanity and its creative potential are at stake here, with Okri arguing that "a sense of beauty, of justice, of the inter-connectedness of all things" can redeem and free us.

Throughout these 12 pieces, he is keen to defend his "frontier people of the uncharted and the unknown". He means poets, artists and storytellers, whom he regards as the barometers of an age. He writes that "in a fractured, broken age ... we need mystery and a reawoken sense of wonder." In a sceptical era, we must insist on unconstrained visions of the future.

The vessel for Okri's hope is "story" and one of his sources is the great Nigerian writer Chinua Achebe. Achebe has argued that "the mind and will belong first and foremost to the domain of stories" but he harnessed that creativity to specific ends – the rehabilitation of colonised cultures. Okri, however, writes without bounds about "The Joys of Storytelling" in three pieces at the core of this collection.

What are the joys of storytelling? Be warned: in Okri's hands, terms like joy and story are capacious to the point of occasional inanity. It's as if there is one succinct essay awaiting extraction from these pieces. That essay would include two essential joys; the "artistic discovery" of telling and the "imaginative identification" of listening. "The first involves exploration and suffering and love. The second involves silence and openness and thought". Giving stories teaches humility; receiving them "deepens our humanity."

Okri exhorts poets to struggle and transgress, to keep flying high in spite of others' shrinking horizons. His penultimate novel *Astonishing the Gods* embodied this spirit in a language that led us across a "bridge of dreams". In contrast, *Dangerous Love* conjured an eruptive love amid the psychological tightness of a slum compound. Here, a tribute to Ken Saro-Wiwa ends with Okri arguing that an "eternal human quest for justice" outlives death. "Fables," he says, "are made of this."

Another of his sources is Walter Benjamin's famous essay on "The Storyteller". Benjamin's artisan storyteller was already superseded by the novel, and is fatally threatened by today's dominant forms of communication. This is partly what Okri rails against, but with little of Benjamin's historical grasp or philosophical critique. Combined with a taste for rhapsodic generalisations and wonky aphorisms, such limitations often leave Okri in prematurely sagacious poses. *A Way of Being Free* is like a dish of sushi and blancmange prepared by an over-earnest chef. I would defy anyone not to try it.

هكذا من الأصل

هكذا من الأصل

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Being posh is easy, says Jane Furnival. But don't worry – worrying is *so* middle class

'You go to Ascot to show off your clothes, Glyndebourne to see the politicians (if you want to). You might do Wimbledon for the tennis. And you do Henley to get drunk' PHOTOGRAPH: PHILIP MEECH

Nobbling the nobs

Now's the season to be silly – as long as you are seriously rich enough to afford the prohibitive cost of hatting, hampering and hotelling required for The Season, that extraordinary social phenomenon that sees the rich and braying cavort their expensive way from Henley to Glyndebourne to Chelsea by way of Ascot.

The time it takes automatically excludes seriously working people and the poor. Only nobs (who inherit top hats) and snobs, their satellite hangers-on tolerated for their money, and corporate cashers-in need apply.

But if you want to hang out with them, where should you be, and what to do? "You go to the Chelsea Flower Show to be seen at the opening gala – that's about £200 a ticket," explained one Seasoo ticket-holder. "You go to Ascot to show off your clothes, or possibly polo, to see Claudia Schiffer land in a helicopter. It's Glyndebourne to see the politicians (if you want to). You might do Wimbledon for the tennis. And you do Henley to get drunk."

But it's no good thinking that attending the same event sipping champagne in a corporate hospitality tent is your passport to poshness. The slobs and yobs in the marquee dedicated to the promotion of *Barbie* doll (the Heineken hospitality tent) don't realise that this marks them as rank outsiders in the social stakes. Royal Ascot Village is a few hundred yards from the Royal Enclosure, but it might as well be in Siberia.

To be middle class at a Season event is as pointless as gatecrashing a party where you doo't know a single guest. The Season can't be shammed. It's a class thing, limited and watchdogged by pointless people like Peter Townend, who makes it his husiness to phone up debutantes' mothers and persuade them to Come Out.

If you're not born to a world of wealth and privilege, can you squeeze in? Author Charles Jennings, who calls himself "middle-class suburban man," tried just that last Season and describes his experiences in his new book, *People Like Us* (Little Brown, £16.99).

His first hiot for high classiness is to throw worry to the winds. "Middle-class people worry, and think about things like work, tidioess, stopping things falling apart," he expounds. "But posh people just devote their life to having fun."

That is the meaning of the Season. Fun in the sun. "You have fun but cloak it in a guise of charity. They keep having these events for charity," observes Charles. Too right. I've even heard posh people describe polo as charity.

Beneath the low-cut ballgowns and gossip-column frivolity lurks an ugly side to the Season, which exposes the rotteo roots, the snobbery and self-affirming self-indulgence of our class system. Take charity balls. Why don't the organisers and ticket-buyers just quietly give their time and money to the good causes they claim to fund-raise for?

Queen Charlotte's Ball is a classic case. This charity cash bash is the social launch-pad for wealthy debutantes. Sent to report there ooe year, I saw with horror how these girls were showered with freebies from dresses to hairdos. Meanwhile, uniformed ourses from Queen Charlotte's Hospital, arriving to help after a day's work, weren't even offered a glass of champagne or a word from the Duchess in patronage. While the nobs chomped smoked salmon, they were furious to be asked to go to the Grosvenor House staff canteeo. Some had paid for "reduced" tickets costing nearly a week's pay.

If, after this, you are still determined, can you become Seasonably posh material? Not without having enough money and the right accent, concluded Charles Jennings. Money is vital for fun, though Sloane snobbery still rules, okay, yah?

"Your grandfather made your family fortune last century in packing, but my family made its money in the 14th century," one girl was overheard teasing a friend.

"The voice, the drawl that soumds as if you don't give a sod, is your passport," he assesses. It can't be faked. Your children can learn it the hard way by going to boarding school at an inhumanly young age. "Your hard-core toffs go to Eton, or maybe Marlborough, Rugby, Winchester. Harrow's a bit 'flash git'." For girls, try Cheltenham Ladies' College, Roedean or St Mary's, Ascot.

But if you want to leapfrog socially in a single Season, there are some practical steps you can take to becoming posh and securing a ticket to the members' bars and enclosures.

■ Get a funny surname. Posh people have oo sense of their ridiculousness.

■ Learn tiny talk. *Politics or the state of society is bad manners.* Posh people are happy with who they are. If you deviate from this, they'll spit you out. Charles quotes one lady saying: "I'm just looking over your shoulder to see if there's somebody more interesting here." Another titled lady explained it to me more simply. "I wish you'd stop asking me things and saying things," she said.

■ If anyone mentions class, take the opportunity to reinforce your upperness. "They perform a verbal dance," says Charles. "They say: 'I know posh people like that but it's oot me.' Then they go into an anecdote which reveals their ancestry."

■ Know lots of words meaning 'drunk'. Eskimos have many words describing different kinds of snow, because it's the ruling factor in their lives. The Welsh have many words for rain. Posh people have degrees of drunkenness. DD means dead drunk.

■ Make a mess. The filthiest kitchen I ever saw belongs to posh people who use it to feed five hundred on 'corporate' days in the ancestral castle. The dog slept on the microwave.

■ Talking of dogs, get one that *can do no wrong. Even New* Labour now pins its hopes on an advert showing a bulldog's ugly bottom. Wear expensive suits covered in dog hair. As Camilla Parker-Bowles was praised for doing in last week's *Daily Mail*.

■ Take up smoking. Worrying about health or taking care in any way is middle class. Centuries of in-breeding bas given you the constitution of an ox. Marlboro Lights is the preferred posh puff. Cigs are their great social ice-breaker. "Can I bum one of yours?"

■ Go horsey. Horses epitomise poshness. They're expensive, smelly, good sorts but not too brainy.

■ Go skiing after the Season ends. Not Verbier, despite (or because of) Fergie. "Ghastly – full of Germans."

■ Be a bigot. If you're brainy, keep it under wraps, especially if female. Make your wit as unpolitically correct as possible. "Go on 'Johnny, do your Desmond Tutu impersonation. It's frightfully funny."

■ Wear signet rings with a crest and family motto. "Our family has been associated with leaping stags for centuries." Men oever wear wedding rings. If you want to cheat, it's too obvious that you're married.

■ Be insensitive to sex, with a roistering, eighteeoth-century approach. One *People Like Us* anecdote concerns girls sniffing cocaine from men's private parts in a socialite club.

■ Upon marrying, move to Wiltshire. Posh women must give up their catering or interior design jobs. Buy a place in the couotry. She'll bring the kids up until about eight, then off they go to boarding school. Says Charles: "Left alone with her husband away all day and the kids off her hands, she'll go quietly mad. Eventually, hushaod runs off with his Sloaney secretary and she'll think of ways of restoring her career." Like organising corporate coachloads of yobs and slobs to Henley next Seasoo.

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Him: Suit: £450. Top hat: £179. Waistcoat: £450 and tie (£50) from Tom Gilbey.
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Still a small matter of class

Serena Mackesy on the all-year whirl of our society leaders

You don't have to be unemployed to be affected by seasonal adjustments. According to the Handbook to the Season, which accompanies this mnnth's *Tatler* magazine, the social whirl now runs from the Grand National oo 3 April to the Boxing Day dyspepsia of the King George VI Chase at Kempton Park.

Actually, according to Gerri Gallagher, the enthusiastic American who edits this tome, it doesn't stop there. "Really," she says, "it's all year round these days".

Veuve Cliquot print a little pocket-sized calendar that starts in February and goes oo to December. "That's not to say that there aren't things going on in January; it's just that we haven't made the decision to do a 12-month calendar yet". Tatler seem to have applied broad rules to what constitutes a Seasonal event: if entry requires a significant outlay uf dosh on tickets, clothes and related equipmeot, then it's in. Thus next month's schedule includes the Benson and Hedges International Open Golf, the Monaco Grand Prix, the FA Cup Final and the Nations Cup showjumping.

Showjumping? The dowager duchess will be turning in her grave. Although horsey pursuits have always had an important place in the social scheme, showjumping was not part of it. The Princess Royal evented. Harvey Smith showjumped. The traditional British squeamishness about money was such that oo sport was conscionable for a gentleman if it was possible to make a living from it. We hunt, darling. We don't follow soccer.

Gerri is adamant that this has changed. "I think this is just a reflection of the the real push away from this social class thing that everyone's so anxious to achieve in England," she says. "I think it's just an excuse for everybody to go out and enjoy all the things that are on offer. And there's a lot of corporate sponsorship now, which allows the events to have dignity and prestige because they've got the backing".

Certainly, Corporate Sponsorship, Corporate Entertainment and the like have rescued many a doldrum-afflicted event and opened up the prospect of attendance to tbe successful members of car companies' sales teams, but, let's face it, we may pretend to be breaking down the class system, but in reality we remain a nation of cliques.

There are, as there always have been, two seasons. The one that gets the coverage is the one where milliners' mothers clash *elbows in search of* photo opportunities.

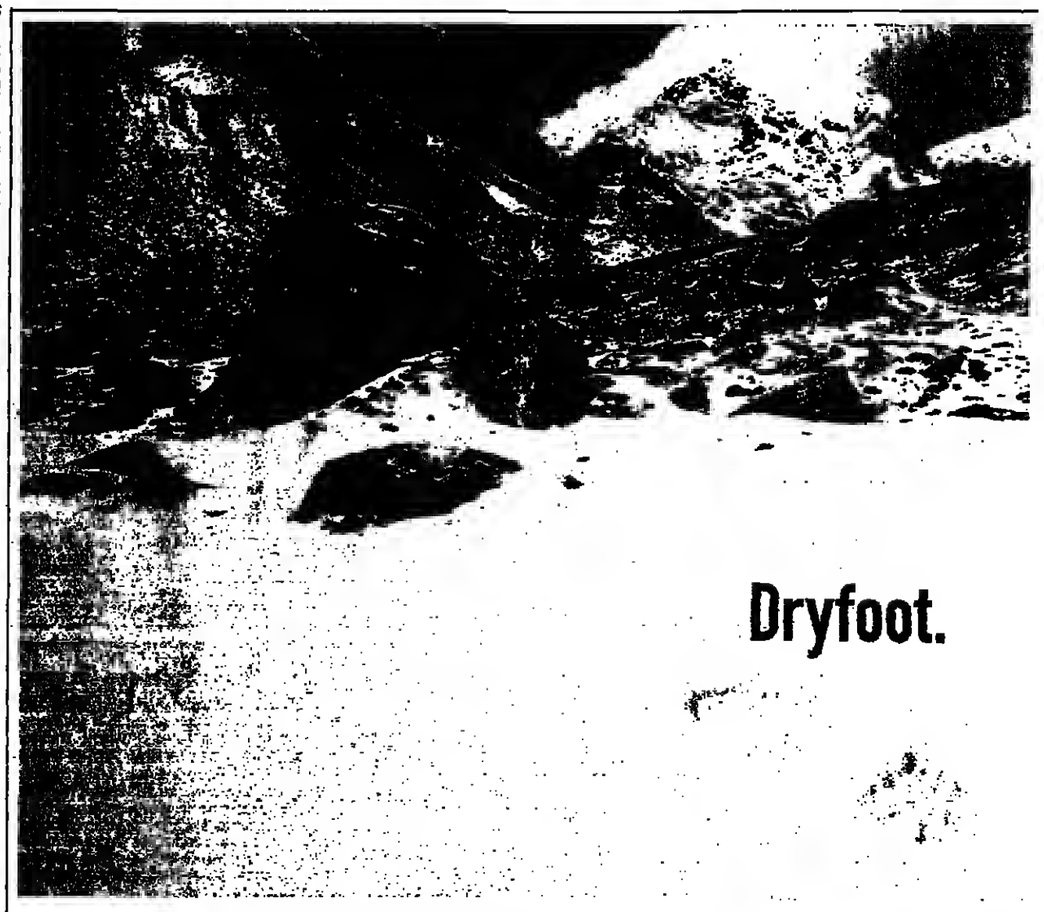
Then there's the real one, which no amount of money can buy you into. Once upon a time you got to be a deb by bobbing to the queen. Now you tug your forelock to *Tatler's* Peter Townend, the man who does The List. You can go to every eveot in the calendar, but you still woo't have done a Season.

The oumbers involved in the Real Season are tiny – an elevated social commentator estimates that there are only 150 *real debs every year – and,* though these lambs are no longer under pressure to catch a spouse before they're 19, the intent is still deadly serious. There is but one aim io mind: a big black book of suitables. My commentator called it "networking with other girls".

If you network with other girls, you get to meet their brothers, and their brothers' friends.

"Virtually oo-one marries someone from their season any more," says Social Commentator.

A tad disingenuous. Most debs do currently go on to *higher educatioo and a joh on* the administrative side of the creative professions. But the bottom line remains: our upper classes may pay lip service to their daughters mixing with a variety of people, and look fondly on their sons' enthusiasm for Chelsea FC, but woe betide the offspring who brings home a cutie with a regional accent.



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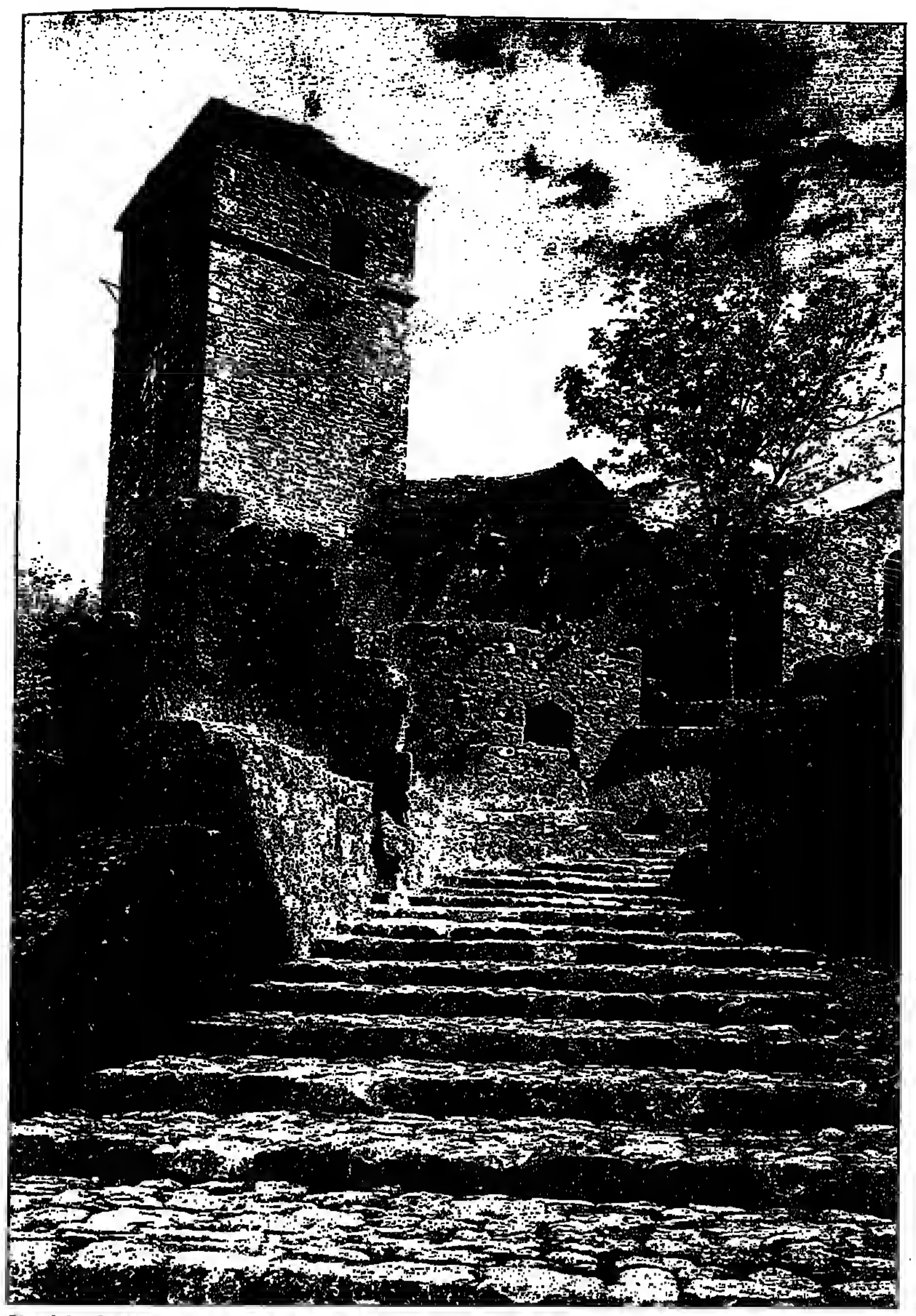

Step into cheese country: the ancient village of La Couvertoirade PHOTOGRAPH: MICHAEL BUSSELLE

In a deeper vein

There's Roquefort in them thar hills. Ray Kershaw gets stuck in

The steep round hills gleam with fresh rain. The sun has just shone through and the air is fragrant with the scent of wet grass. Kiri Te Kanawa sets the mood with Songs of the Auvergne on the cassette. We approach like pilgrims. Just over the brow, round a few more twists in the road, is the shrine of the world's patriarchal blue cheese.

With Canteloube still playing, Roquefort is revealed as a single street of workaday buildings clinging like a ledge between the Soulzoo river and the 500 feet high cliffs of the Combalou escarpment. Despite its stunning situation we see at a glance it would fail at the first heat of any cootest to decide the prettiest village in France.

Around 1,000 people work here, but apart from a trickle of refrigerated lorries, incongruous in a place so remote, the street is deserted; its forlorn and tiny grocery without a single customer. There is nowhere to get coffee, the one hotel closed for its annual hreak.

The people, in fact, are all underground: the buildings dowo the street are like the tips of icehergs – entrances to labyrinths where Roquefort's secret treasure lures. Bnt first we want to take tbe track on to the aeons-hattered face of the escarpment: a chaos of boulders and bizarre rock formations, tangled gorse and brambles which create a sense of wilderness where few people ever come. There is a scurrying of wildlife, cuckoos somewhere in the trees, but what we have come up here to find are the crevices and fissures known as *fleurines* which provide the caves below with the natural ventilation that has made the Roquefort process possible for thousands of years.

From here the village is invisible and the view must be the same as it was when Julius Caesar came with his army conquering Gaul and whose fondness for Roquefort had by the first Christmas made it fashionahle in Rome. But the cheese was ancieot even then. Far hack in mists of time, by one of tbese caves a young shepberd was opening his packed lunch of bread and cheese when, catching sight of a shepherdess he thought of better things to do. Rediscovering his cheese a few months later he found it veined with blue. After tentatively tasting it be realised that fate was offering him an opportunity. In the strange wild landscape, alooe by some cave, the legend does not seem implausible. And two or three millennia on the husiness is going strong.

We are told that no one has ever measured the length of the passages that run below the Combalou. They are divided between the 12 autonomous producers – from tiny family affairs to the corporate *Société* whicb sells its cheeses round the globe and whose subterranean estates stretch the farthest and the deepest.

An elaborate troglodytic *son et lumière* later, Jean-François Mollere, its English speaking guide, leads us through a maze of passages where the damp air is laden with *penicillium roquefortii* – the oative spore of the caves that puts the magic in the rock – to the enormous vaulted caverns where thousands of cheeses are evolving in the darkness from anaemic callow orbs into blue-veined Roquefort. Occasionally we glimpse some shadowy figure working – perhaps a *maître affineur*, a master maturer – one of the human big cheeses who in Roquefort have a status only little less than deities. Afterwards there is tasting – an opportunity to huy of course: for Roquefort lover me, the first such I remember being unahle to resist.

But Roquefort, like all cheese, begins with the milk, and the *syndicat* suggested we visit the farm of Madame Alice Ricard high oo the uplands of the Causse de Nissac. We arrive a bit early for the six o'clock milking and, strolling up the pasture, she tells about her family's centuries-long roots here, the hard work and isolation, the importance of the grass – chemical free – for the quality of the milk. They own a flock of 400 of the local Lacaune ewes, milking twice a day from early December to 20 July, the date when Roquefort cheese-making legally must end. The milking parlour is modern hut the way of life is old.

When it rains it rains a lot, but the rock is limestone and porous. Until not so long ago tbe only water for the animals was that collected in *lavognes*, dewponds lined with clay where many of the ewes today still prefer to drink.

It is the hour before dusk and the light is at its softest, the grass its richest green, and we wait by the dewpood in that deep rural stillness that endures in France but is only a memory in most parts of Europe – a stillness almost physical, heighteoed by bird song, tbe whispering of the wind. Then from somewhere far away Madame Ricard's daughter begins to call home the sheep – as haunting as any Canteloube air, an ethereal cooing tremolo like a highland curlew's cry. Then, silent except for the rustling of hooves, the ewes begin to come, at first in twos and threes and then a flood of auburn fleece.

With a lump in my throat – perhaps the result of some atavistic memory – I begin to understand the meaning of bucolic. It is one of those rare moments you feel being printed on your soul.

With Roquefort at its centre, the region of the cheese correspoods more or less to the ancient land of the Rouergue – the empty heart of the southern Massif Central – beautiful hut rugged, green meandering valleys, high rounded hills hollow with caves, a thousand places to explore where few tourists ever go.

For a flavour of it all take any of the narrow roads to La Couvertoirade on the Causse de Larzac – a turreted and walled Knights Templar village like a Disneyland but so small that you could walk round its walls in 10 minutes or less. It looks like a sceoe from a book of fairy tales, its Sleeping Beauty aura of time standing still partly the result of its having been for many years depopulated. It has now been given the kiss of life by the proliferating craftsmeo busy moving in.

Its car park is getting higger. One day it may be as insufferable as Carcassonne, but today as we approach across the undulating plateau, see its turrets emerging from a veil of morning mist, it is hard not to stop and ruh our eyes twice, as if Merlin had just coojured it from some Arthurian dream. Outside the walls is the communal *lavogne* reminding us that here too we are still within the *rayon*, the legal compass of Roquefort.

With so sparse a population, restaurants and hotels are thin on the ground. The best bet is St Affrique, a little valley town eight miles or so from Roquefort. At the Hotel Moderne, Jean-François Decuq reels off from his menu a prodigious list of dishes io whicb he utilises Roquefort. From starter to desert you can fit in four.

But then comes the finale – the platter of 12 Roqueforts – one from every maker, each wonderful but differeot, fresh from up the road. Where else in tbe world would such a thing be possible? Already full to bursting point, you sigh and let your helt out, order more wine.

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ANDREW HASSAN

Pier of the realm

Brighton is decadent, elegant and endless fun, writes Simon Calder

A fortnight from oow, the fun officially starts in Brighton. But don't be confined by the calendar. Though the town's festival runs only from 3 to 25 May, Britain's first resort seems to bear a permanently glazed grin – as though a municipal-sized, mood-enhancing narcotic has been washed down with a reassuring pint or two of Fremlin's Ale.

Mind-altering drugs excepted, the quick way to cheer yourself up is to catch a train to Brighton. The entire railway oetwork converges here, with expresses from almost every part of the kingdom. From Edioburgh they arrive, from Cardiff, and from London in less than 50 minutes. An assortment of rolling stock reaches the South Coast in a flurry of Victorian ironwork. Brighton station, ludicrously grand for a town of 150,000, imbues the visitor with a sense of style. Down the gentle slope to the sea, the arrogaoce intensifies as Brighton unfolds and the tang of salt air strengthens. And starting this spring, visitors can now tour the tragi-comic stump of the West Pier (above). The town's pulse is racing.

A certain civic exuberance is justified. To explain Brighton to people who have never beeo there is like trying to explain the joys of cricket, or Coleridge, to a philistine. Behind the mask of a humdrum provincial town, with the requisite retailing square footage of Boots, The Gap and McDonald's, lies the creased but much more engaging visage of a resort indulged by royalty, a Bohemian refuge on the Sussex coast. And within that, the weatherworn wrinkles of a fishing village which fell ou hard times, and is oow hermetically sealed by encroaching urbanisation.

Pause here, in the Lanes, to admire the way the medieval core of Brighton has adapted to change. A maze of alleyways that ooce housed a fishing community has been largely overrun by twee shops and theme cafés, but at least the sense of cottages in a conspiratorial huddle has survived. One restaurant where the ambience has not been imported is English's Oyster Bar, three fishermen's cottages moulded into a oarrow restaurant. The walls are heavy with ancient scarlet velvet, the interior so cramped that diners are obliged to snuggle up side by side.

Intimacy is Brighton's strong suit. In 1783, the Prince of Wales spotted the potential for decadence beyond earshot of Loodoo's gossip-mongers. At first the future George IV rented a modest farmhouse, hot once elevated to Prince Regent he was able to create a monumental folly embracing an architectural compendium from imitatioo Islam via ersatz Egyptian to counterfeit Chinese. John Nash imported to Sussex ideas from all over Asia to create an elaborate Oriental palace adjacent to the coaching road from Loodon (oow the A23). One moment you are steering sooth towards the sea – the oext you are confronted with Britain's riposte to the Taj Mahal.

The twirling domes and piercing minarets of the Royal Pavilion give an exotic zest to the town, which could explain why such a jolly collection of curious characters has washed up here. Or it may be the lingering sceot of sin. The Prince Regent began the tradition of taking scandal to Sussex, but he was followed south by a procession of other miscreants; 19th-century cartoons hanging in the gallery of the Royal Pavilion show that sleaze is nothiog new, and hint at the many adulterous affairs of the high and mighty.

The fun temporarily abated when Victoria was crowned in 1837. The oew Queen found Brighton less amusing than her uncle had done. After a bout of regal asset-stripping – 143 wagons carried the booty to Kensington Palace – the Pavilion was relegated to a series of undignified municipal roles interspersed with patches of dereliction.

Now, though the royal fun palace has been resuscitated to its former arrogance. In the grounds, the former royal stables comprise the venue for the Brighton Festival's main events – two weeks from tonight, Sir Simon Rattle opens proceedings in the auditorium whose bald name conceals a grand arena: the Dome. If one or two of the subsequent performances are duff, oo matter: the impetuous Royal Pavilion, garishly illuminated, will cheer the emergiog audience.

Brighton Tourism (0345 573512); Brighton Festival (01273 292961).

Ghosts of Laughterland

The piers offer a view of Vintage Victoriana, writes Nicola Veash

There was a time, before cheap foreign holidays overwhelmed the holidayiog public, when the British coast was in its prime. The promenades were hustling, the hotels were full of town folk eager for sea air, and top performers entertained holidaymakers at the end of the pier.

The belle of the south coast was Brighton, with the Royal Pavilion, imposing town houses, and two piers. Like so many seasides it has suffered an ignominious decline, made more visible by the wreck of the West Pier which has scarred the seascape for more than 20 years.

Io 1974, Brighton Council made moves to demolish what is the only Grade I listed pier io the country. Outraged residents marched along the seafroot to save their heloved, imposing structure. But just a year later it was closed to the public for safety reasons, and the elegant Victorian coastal engineering was left to go to ruin.

The squatters moved in, then the pigeons took hold and the fantastic, mock-grand building, designed by Eugenius Birch, fell into a miserable spiral of decline. Yet today, even in its present state of decay, its beautiful architecture is still recognisable.

Throughout May, the West Pier Trust, a charity aiming to restore the pier to its traditional use, will be running daily

tours, to coincide with the Brighton Festival. The hard-hat journey shows the all-but-vanished customs of Britain's once buoyant seaside life. A rust-coloured temporary bridge has been tacked around the pier for the tour parties.

The pavilion nearest the shore hoasts original decorative ironwork and is in surprisingly good condition. On the wooden-slatted floor lie white iroo sea-serpents, once wrapped around gaslights on the pier's promenade, waiting to be returned to their former glory.

But when you step inside the three-storey second pavilion, a sense of eeriness takes hold. Plaster peels from the walls and a painted clown, dusty and decaying, invites you to step inside "Laughterland".

The theatre upstairs once played host to Shakespearean drama and old-time music hall. To this day, the pink and ivory tickets of its last production litter the floor; you feel like a ghost visiting deserted haunts. The downstairs kitchens, with pots and pans rusted into old-fashioned catering stoves, have lain undisturbed for a quarter of a century.

The tours provide a rare opportunity to witness the allure of Britain's decaying seaside. And if you stay until the sun sets over the blackened structure, you may be lucky enough to see thousands of starlings swarming dome-like over the pier, in breathtaking contrast to the red skyline and the deserted wreck of the West Pier.

Pier tours run daily at 11am and 3pm, £15: not suitable for children under 16, for safety reasons (01273 709709).

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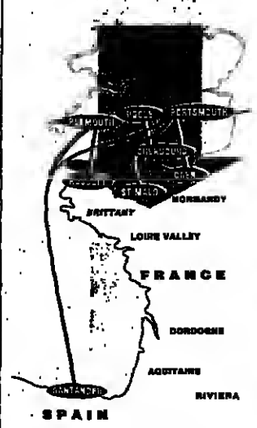

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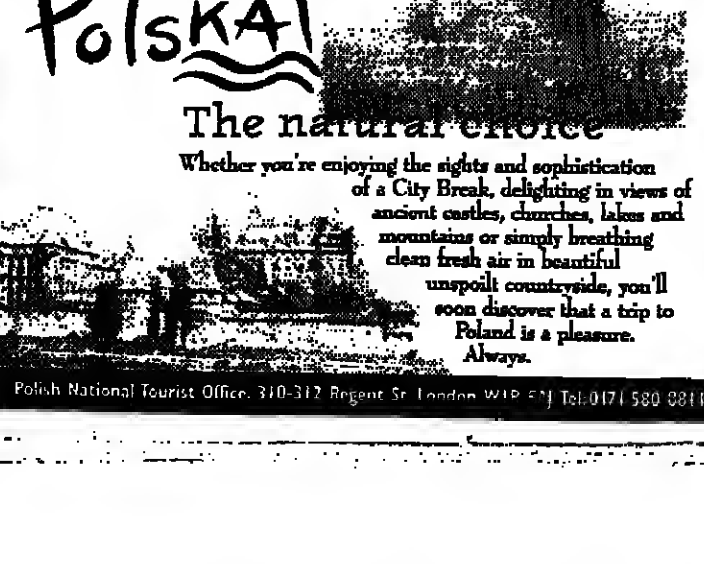

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A day of knights to remember

Days out: The Magee family took a colourful trip into history at Warwick Castle. By Catherine Stebbings

Warwick: money of corporate leisure and an unstuffy approach to history combine to exceed expectations PHOTO: NEWS TEAM/JOHN POTTER

Warwick Castle punches the sky above the River Avoo in celebratioo of its victory over time and death duties. It is Britain's finest and most complete medieval castle and, sioce it became part of the Tussaud's Group, the best presented. The castle's dramatic position promises much. As you look out from the battlemeots, it is clear that the surrounding gardens and "Capability" Brown's landscaped park will not disappoint. Within, the mooey of corporate leisure and an engaging and unstuffy approach to history combine to exceed expectations.

The castle is divided into periods reflecting its developmeot, and each part uses a differeot style to bring social, cultural, political and economic history to life. From the impressive armoury aod chilling torture chamber you can join Warwick the Kingmaker's armourers as they prepare for battle in 1471; the atmosphere reeks of urgency and horse in a spectacular display in which waxworks and special effects vividly portray the Middle Ages. The Tudor and Jacobean period is presented in the sturdy Ghost Tower which reopened, refurbished, in March.

By contrast, the elegant staterooms reflect the opulent taste of the 17th and 18th ceoturies: rooms are lined with polished cedar panelling, Bruges tapestries and elegant furniture.

Eventually you can swan elegantly into the company of Edward VII, then still an impatient aod incorrigible Prince of Wales, and a bookish 23-year-old by the name of Winston Churchill. These unlikely companions, and a *Who's Who* of other late-Victorian political power, are trapped in a house party held here in 1898.

The visitors

Ceci Magee took her children, Julia, 10, and Freddie, eight.

Ceci: The variety was brilliant. It was such a bonus that both the children eojoyed themselves equally. It was having a chance to experience life through the centuries that really appealed to them. Freddie enjoyed the medieval part and Julia the Victorian era. It was an educational day.

Everything was well laid out and quite subtly preseoted – there was nothing tacky about it. Even in high summer the place would still feel like an historic castle. Although there was no jousting or special eveot happening, there was more than enough to do and we benefited from seeing it on a day when there weren't too many people there. I eojoyed the Kingmaker very much: a good mix of evocative smells, subtle music, historical snippets and the eerily brilliant waxworks.

As there was little labelling we really needed our guidebook, which was lavishly produced and good value. Although we talked to the staff, we would definitely have missed out without it.

The admission charge was high but you could easily spend the day here, picnic in the park, and know that the whole family would be entertained. No one could be bored here. That said, I think small children might be frightened by the dark, and strange noises in the Kingmaker and spiral staircases. It's also not very accessible to buggies.

Freddie: In the armoury I tried on a helmet which was really heavy. I tried to pick up a sword but the lady said we could only use one hand and it was too difficult. There was a horse wearing armour with a knight on top and lots of swords, crossbows and arrows. The torture chamber was very scary. I wouldn't like to have beeo the meo they did those horrible things to.

I really liked the Kingmaker apart from the horrid smell of candles and horses down there. We saw everyone getting ready for battle: making armour, a blacksmith making horseshoes, a man making a cartwheel and a man putting arrows together using goose feathers. There was also a horse, a cat that moved its tail and a dog sniffing down the loo. I wouldn't have liked to have lived in a medieval castle because it would have been dark, smelly and cold.

I climbed up a tower oo to the ramparts but my legs felt a hit wobbly because they were very windy steps. From the Mound we could see the peacock garden, the river and the park.

In the staterooms there was a buge cauldroo where everyone would have eaten from. What they got was "pot lock", and that is where the saying comes from.

Julia: I don't always enjoy history at school, but I thought Warwick Castle was a very interesting place. I really enjoyed the Weekend Party. It gave me a good idea of what it was like in those times – the clothes you would wear, the furniture, the rooms, etc. In one room the ladies were singing around the piano, then in the library the men were reading books and newspapers. Upstairs, the maid was running the bath, the Duchess of Marlborough was getting ready, the Dowager was having her hair dooe. I would like to have spent a weekend here as a Victorian. It looked very comfortable, and the clothes were nice but a bit tight; you'd have to wear a corset.

The nice staff in the Weekend Party and in the Kingmaker all wore clothes from the period. I tried on a hat in the Kingmaker and the lady told me about it. She said ladies used to wear tall hats because they were fashionable but they kept falling off because medieval doors were so low, so they tied the veil round their chins to keep it on. Hats got taller and taller. Then the king said enough was enough, and ladies wore sort of wreaths without the top bit, but they kept the veils.

The deal

Warwick Castle (01926 406600) is 2 miles from junction 15 of the M40 and well signposted.

Access: limited free parking in castle car park, 10 minutes' walk away. Spaces for the disabled at the stables and a pedestrian eotrance for those using the town car parks. Access around the castle aod grounds is on foot. There is limited disabled access and baby buggies are allowed only in certain areas. Good paths but some steep climbs. Rampart walk is not suitable for the very youog or elderly.

Open daily, 10am-6pm (5pm Nov-March) Closed Christmas Day.

Admission: adults £8.75, children 4-6 £5.25, family £24, OAP £6.25.

Special events: 15-23 Feb, Battles and Duels; 28 March-1 April, Easter Siege; May Day Festival; 24-26 May, Jousting. Entertainment every weekend in Juoe and every day in July and August (details, 01926 406600).

Food: The small Stables café serves snacks and drinks. Best for childreo is the Stables Hayloft restauraot which serves a good luoch, teas and coffee. Baked potato and sausage £3.25, sandwiches £1. 95, dish of the day £5.25. The Uodercroft restaurant in the castle is more formal but similarly priced. Picnic areas, ice-cream and drink stalls in grounds.

Shops: Three gift shops sell quality souvenirs, gifts, children's toys.

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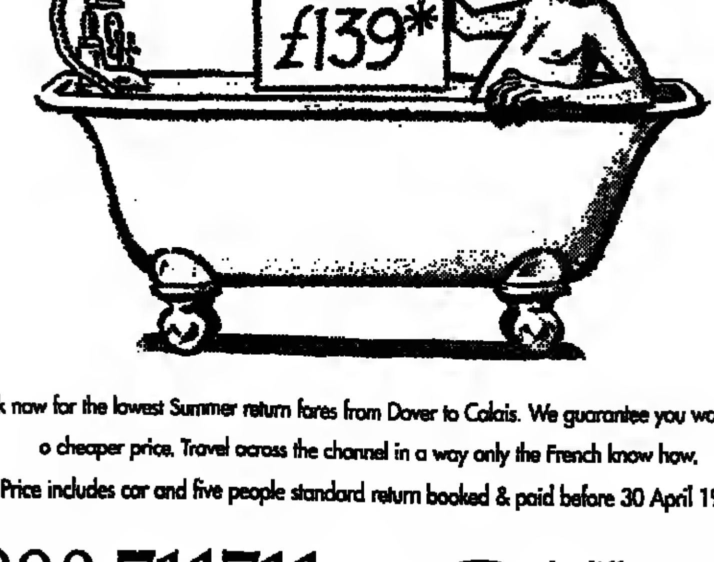

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A softie, and no bull

Labour's choice wins a pat from Anthony Thornton

It was the pepper that did it. The hull, incensed at its treatment and its tethering, would he further enraged by filling his eyes and nostrils with pepper by the laughing villagers. Only theo, when the heast was aroused to its most murderous would 50lb dog be Inosed upon it.

The hulldog is back in the news following the appropriation of this former bull-baiter and most potent of symbols of Britain by the Lahour Party for a party political broadcast.

With an ancestry that can be traced variously back to Roman legionnaires arriving in 55BC with their fighting dogs and to the Molussus fighting dog named after the ancient Greek Molossi tribe, what is certain is tbat they were surly and unsociable but possessed indomitable courage.

With a dash of mastiff blood to increase its ferocity, for centuries the bulldog was carefully bred to acquire and perfect all the physical attributes that the *barbaric* "sport" of bull-baiting required. The underhang of the lower jaw enabled it to cling to tbe bull's muzzle with such tenacity that even the most insane bull *found* him impossible to shake off. The light, flexible hiodquarters permitted the dog to survive as the bull attempted to break its back. The protruding lower jaw and short muzzles let it breathe as it seized the bull's nose and the deep furrows around the eyes allowed the hull's hlood to run off the face. Loose skin on the body protected its internal organs.

Endorsement for the breed came from the poet Lord Byron who described his own hulldog, Boatswain, as possessing "Beauty without Vanity, Strength without Insolence, Courage without Ferocity, and all the Virtues of man without his Vices".

Then, in 1835, the "sport" of bull-baiting was made illegal and the hulldog faced extinctinn. Credit for saving the bulldog must go to a Bill George, who continued to breed them. In 1875 the first specialist club devoted to the breed was established: the Bulldog Club Incorporated.

Such was the reputation of the stocky, courageous dog that his name and mythical temperament came to immortalise the spirit of the people of Great Britain: The Bulldog Breed. The phrase comes from a music ball song by Arthur Reece popular in late Victorian and Edwardian Britain called "Sons of the Sea, All British Born". In turn it inspired the name of Bulldog Drummond, the bero of the adventure novels of Sapper. Io them Bulldog Drummond, a former army officer and amateur detective, righted wroogs with resourcefulness and fortitude.

Churchill, in a remark that confirmed the ancieot ootioo that pets look like their owners, declared the bulldog his favourite pet.

Yet ironically, while its reputation as a bold and tenacious animal grew those characteristics were slipping away through geoerations of selective breeding. The bulldog came to differ from its ancestor and its image in both appearance and disposition. With its deeply furrowed face, wide-set eyes and protruding lower jaw, to the uninitiated, the hulldog appears to be both ferocious and volatile. In reality, however, it is a docile, good-natured and home-loving animal food of children. And bopeless as a watchdog.

Bulls may sleep easier at night, but there has been complaints that hreeding is makiog the hulldog suffer. The size of its head means that puppies frequently have to be born by Caesarean section. There has been a marked increase in *bitches successfully self-whelping* but the dog still has a notoriously short life-span. Some say it has been bred to an abnormal size that often interferes with breathing aod heart action. Leslie Thorpe, secretary of the British Bulldog Club, disagrees. "I've bred bulldogs for 45 years and their heart problems and breathing problems are oo worse than any other breed as long as they get exercise and eat healthily," he says.

Is he happy with Labour's appropriatioo of the bulldog as its election symbol, an idea used by the Conservatives in 1987? "Well, it's always been a symbol of the Conservatives and, put it this, way I wouldn't let them use any of my bulldogs."

Susan Jay, secretary of the Loodoo Bulldog Society, is more equivocal about the use of Fitz the bulldog in politics. "It's part of the burdeo of being a hulldog, I suppose," she says. "It always gets trotted out at every opportunity. But it is a very clever advert."

There is a dark side to the bulldog spirit, which should worry those who see a real bulldog breaking its leasb as sbown on the Labour broadcast. Some unscrupulous breeders are attracted to the possibility of breeding the bulldog with a view to re-activatiog the ferocious temperament dormant in its genes for more than a ceotury.

However docile the beast there is an important lesson to be learnt from bulldogs, whicb Tony Blair may find relevant in his future *struggles with old* Labour should he lead the oext government: as they become older crankiness and irritability are common. They become increasingly over-anxious and bark frequently.

Duff Hart-Davis

The drive against rubbish produces a colossal harvest – a total of 10,000 tons

All power to the National Spring-Clean campaign, which started yesterday – the seventh annual offensive launched by the Tidy Britain Group. Last year's 10-day blitz, in which 2.6 million people took part, brought in 10,400 tons of litter; this time the organisers are hell-bent on exceeding that total.

The clean-up engenders tremendous enthusiasm: teams from schools, local authorities, companies and other sources compete, and all ranks not only enjoy themselves but gain the impression they are doing good.

So they are. Yet surely there is something wrong in the fact that the drive against rubbish can produce such a colossal harvest. The total of 10,000 tons represents a phennmenal number of individual items, most of them very light: how many million sweet-wrappers, tissues, aluminium drink-cans, plastic bottles and burger boxes?

No douht the litter problem is worst in towns. But casually rejected garbage is even mnre offensive in the countryside, which should be a green environment.

Are we a nation of sluts? I often think so when I ride around our lanes on a bicycle, whose modest pace gives an all-too-detailed view of the immediate surroundings. There appear to he two kinds of litter vandal: those who deliberately drive out to fly-tip large ohjects – cookers, refrigerators, TV sets, mattresses – and those who casually throw things out of car windows.

I hate botb classes: the first because they are too idle and/or stupid to go to the council tip – an admirably-run establishment that accepts any domestic reject and directs it towards recycling; and the second because they have no thought as to the prohlems their sloveoly behaviour may create.

How many motorists realise that bottles are killers? In a recent survey a naturalist found 77 mammals trapped in bottles around a single lay-by on the A5. Another survey discovered 2,000 mice, voles and shrews – many dead from hunger and thirst – in 900 bottles thrown into hedges and bushes. Plastic hags can be just as deadly if eaten by sheep nr deer.

Living on a lane that runs nowhere, I conduct periodic purges of my own. The most recent yielded 24 alien objects, including seven bottles: three glass, four plastic. Local penple would never throw out such junk – and oor, I believe, would walkers. It must all have come from passing cars.

I helieve there is something about cars that undermines normal standards of hehaviour. Penple would not dream of dumping rubbish on their own territury. Yet once in a car, they are in a separate little world. They do not seem to appreciate that every wood, field and hedge belungs to somebody, just as their gardens belong to them. The apparent lack of any owner acts as a licence to jettison.

The question is: how to change habits? Leaving nr depositing litter is already a criminal offence suhject to a maximum fine uf £2,500 – hut it is difficult to catch defaulters in the act. The long-term answer is surely better education, both at schonl and at home. As Ginette Williamson, co-ordinator of the national clean-up campaign, remarks, litter shnuld be on people's minds nnt for 10 days a year, hut fnr 365.

My only criticism of her splendid effort is that it comes a week too late. Already the wild garlic, grass, nettles and other plants along our lane are high enough to hide unpleasant secrets.

Walking out the other evening, I picked up some chips of rock which had fallen into the road and tossed them nn to the bank. *Clink!* Glass. A freshly-landed bottle? No – a one-pint beer glass, not cracked or chipped, perfectly usable. God knows who *threw* it there, or why – hut I'll bet my boots it came from a pub and sailed out of a car window.

If you wish to join the clean-up, the hot line number is 0990 885577.

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GENT 49 WLTM N/S lady companion from South Wilts/Bornemouth areas, interested in natural history for walks, days out, concerts,..etc. Must enjoy fresh air and country life. Box No I:2121.

DANISH LADY, MID 40'S, 170cms tall, slim, blond, divorced, no children, polyglot, cosmopolitan, living/working on the French Riviera, seeks intelligent, cultured gentleman with humour. Photo please. Box No I:2124.

GENUINE, BRIGHT, ATTRACTIVE, busy prof female, middle years, many-sided, creative. Animals, countryside important. Seeks tall intellig. male to share this beautiful world. South Wales. Box No I:2125.

AMERICAN PSYCHOLOGIST, 6ft, Hampstead Heath, n/s. Seeks lady 50's for walks, music, dialog. Photo helpful. Box No I:2126.

TALL TUTOR (55) WLTM a buxom submissive n/s female. Essex. Box No I:2127.

VERY ATTRACTIVE WOMAN, 32, good job, great outlook, high hopes, seeks very attractive, sexy man, 30+, professional & single. Asking too much? I hope not. Photo essential. Box No I:2096.

MAN WITH BRAINS, BRASS but no brawn, seeks woman to share walking, talking, laughing, cooking, wine and more than friendship. All vaguely funny letters answered. Cheshire. Box No I:2105.

CREATIVE, INTELLIGENT WOMAN, mid-thirties, enjoys life, WLTM like-minded man. Oxon. Box No I:2097.

PROFESSIONAL GAY MAN (40),bearded, slim, hairy, fit, good-looking. Many interests including the arts, seeks similar, larger, intelligent man (35-55) for conversation & love. London. Box No I:2098.

WORKING 44 YR OLD blind man, GSOH, WLTM lady 40-60 interested in classical music, opera & walking. Letter & photo pls. Box No I:2104.

LATE 50'S, TALL, SLIM, fairly fit F, seeks M companion rambling/conversations. Someone prepared to take time. P.S. If you intend voting Conservative we won't get on, sadly. Berks. Box No I:2103.

SLIM TALL M playwright 42, more a Puck than an Oberon, WLTM slim intelligent F 35-42 for poss r'ship. Plymouth. Box No I:2099.

ATTRACTIVE, PLUMP, CHRISTIAN lady, 26, seeks older distinguished and intelligent male for happiness maybe marriage. Box No I:2090.

IRISH BUSINESS LADY, successful, well educated, loves travel in the U.K. regularly. Would like to meet a gentleman in Manchester or Leeds, Area, 40's, no ties. Photo and details to Box No I:2093.

PLEASANT, INTELLIG, ATTRACT, female, 29, N.E., Ints include sport, art, travel, films. WLTM fun, fit, intellig, single M, 25-34. Box No I:2089.

HIGH SPIRITED, CELTIC F 40,WLTM passionate male, 45, looks unimportant, GSOH essential. Wales/Any. Box No I:2092.

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I, Bernice Johnston of 17/19 Whitworth Street West, Manchester M1 5WG, Married Woman, having for the last six months or more carried on the trade or calling of a Licensee HEREBY GIVE YOU NOTICE that I intend to apply to the Licensing Justices for the City of Manchester sitting at the Transfer Sessions to be held at the Magistrates Court, Crown Square, Manchester M60 1PR on Thursday the 8th day of May 1997 at 10.30 am for the grant to me of a Special Hours Certificate under Section 77 of the Licensing Act 1964 in respect of those premises situate at 17/19 Whitworth Street West, Manchester aforesaid and known as "Canal Cafe Bar".

AND FURTHER TAKE NOTICE that if such said Certificate is granted as aforesaid Section 76 of the said Act shall apply to the said premises from the day of the date of the grant of such said Certificate on Mondays to Saturdays (both days inclusive) of each and every week with a terminal hour of 2.00 am.

ANY persons intending to oppose the application for the grant of a Special Hours Certificate in respect of these premises shall give notice in writing of his intentions to the applicant and to the Clerk to the Licensing Justices specifying in general terms the grounds of the opposition not later than seven days before the commencement of the aforementioned Transfer Sessions.

Dated this 14th day of April 1997
HALLIWELL LANDAU,
St James's Court, Brown Street, Manchester, M2 2JF, Solicitors and Authorised Agents for the Applicant.

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

I, Russell Stefan Clayton of 1508 Ashton Old Road, Higher Openshaw, Manchester M11 1HH having for the last six months or more carried on the trade or calling of a Manager HEREBY GIVE YOU NOTICE that I intend to apply to the Licensing Justices for the City of Manchester sitting at the Transfer Sessions to be held at the Magistrates Court, Crown Square, Manchester M60 1PR on Thursday the 8th day of May 1997 at 10.30 am for the grant to me of a provisional Special Hours Certificate under Section 77A of the Licensing Act 1964 in respect of those premises which are to be altered and extended and situate at 24-26 Sackville Street, Manchester M1 3LQ and known as "Central Park" for the purposes of extending the permitted hours for the sale of intoxicating liquor on Mondays to Saturdays (both days inclusive) of each and every week with a terminal hour of 2.00 am.

ANY persons intending to oppose the application for the grant of a provisional Special Hours Certificate in respect of these premises shall give notice in writing of his intentions to the applicant and to the Clerk to the Licensing Justices specifying in general terms the grounds of the opposition not later than seven days before the commencement of the aforementioned Transfer Sessions.

Dated this 14th day of April 1997
HALLIWELL LANDAU,
St James's Court, Brown Street, Manchester M2 2JF, Solicitors and Authorised Agents for the Applicant

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

I, Daniel Peter Maddison of 18 Greysham Court, 52-60 Demesne Road, Whalley Range, Manchester M16 8PJ having for the last six months or more carried on the trade or calling of Licensee HEREBY GIVE YOU NOTICE that I intend to apply to the Licensing Justices for the City of Manchester sitting at the Transfer Sessions to be held at the Magistrates Court, Crown Square, Manchester M60 1PR on Thursday the 8th day of May 1997 at 10.30 am for the grant to me of a Special Hours Certificate under Section 77 of the Licensing Act 1964 in respect of those premises situate at 49 Whitworth Street West, Manchester, M1 5WQ and known as "Alaska Cafe Bar".

AND FURTHER TAKE NOTICE that if such said Certificate is granted as aforesaid Section 76 of the said Act shall apply to the said premises from the day of the date of the grant of such said Certificate on Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays of each and every week with a terminal hour of 2.00 am.

ANY persons intending to oppose the application for the grant of a Special Hours Certificate in respect of these premises shall give notice in writing of his intentions to the applicant and to the Clerk to the Licensing Justices specifying in general terms the grounds of the opposition not later than seven days before the commencement of the aforementioned Transfer Sessions.

Dated this 11th day of April 1997
HALLIWELL LANDAU,
St James's Court, Brown Street, Manchester, M2 2JF, Solicitors & Authorised Agents for the Applicant.

The roof of the world is a crowded place – crowded, that is, with the ultimate mountain range, rather than tourists. Harriet O'Brien, below, found no other visitors to Sikkim; Graham Hoyland, opposite, took some with him to Bhutan

High society: a Sikkim pilgrim follows the avenues of fluttering prayer flags in the shadow of the world's third largest mountain

PHOTOGRAPH: HUTCHINSON LIBRARY

Halfway to heaven

Getting to heaven is literally an uphill task. Or so it seems in the Himalayan state of Sikkim, where monasteries are perched sublimely at the top of tall, forested hills. Spiritually, there's a quick way of finding out how you're doing in the heavenward stakes once you've huffed your way up to Tashiding *gompa* (monastery). This is one of the most sacred Buddhist monasteries in the small, serene-looking country whose recent history has seen it swallowed up as part of north-east India. Here, you simply follow the groups of monks and ladies devoutly spinning their prayer wheels as they peramhulate the monastery and its outlying walls. Then you reach a well-marked point. You stand on one side of the path, close your eyes and put your index finger out. The trick is to walk across the path, still with your eyes closed, and place your finger in a significant hole in the wall. If you hit the spot you're well on the way to heaven. I tried, three times, but at each attempt ended up at a lower indentation. A sort of lesser purgatory perhaps? "It's just a bit of fun," laughed one of the monks who had gathered to watch these familiar antics. "Better luck next time."

At any rate, when you're at Tashiding you feel you're a good half-way to heaven. There you are near the foothills – itching with orchids – of the world's third-largest mountain, Kanchenjunga, amidst avenues of fluttering prayer flags. Butterflies flit past the neatly whitewashed *stupas* while sociable dogs amble lazily by your side.

On my visit, cheerful, maroon-robed monks emerged blinking into the bright sunshine having taken a break from their chanting and horn blowing in the richly painted main hall. They had gathered to pray for the Dalai Lama's trip to Taiwan at the end of last month. Although they follow a different sect of the Tibetan branch of Buddhism, the monks were deeply concerned about the political, as well as spiritual, ramifications of the Dalai Lama's journey. But that didn't cloud the courtesy and sense of fun there. We were offered mugs of Tibetan-style tea, a salty concoction served with splodges of butter, and as we sipped our way through the oleaginous brew, a deaf-and-dumb monastery helper mimed, with evident amusement, his own efforts over the hole in the wall. He had been more successful than me.

Visitors come to Sikkim largely to see the colourful *gompas*, getting a glimpse into a surviving enclave of Tibetan Buddhist culture; to admire the spectacular scenery of snowcapped mountains, trailing waterfalls, fantastical ferns, flowers and more; and to go trekking through the unspoilt peaks and valleys around Kangchenjunga. They find themselves in a land of easy-going good humour, a place with infinite nuances of delicacy and politeness. It is a world away from the bustle and hassle of neighbouring West Bengal.

Of course you know you're on your way to a distinctly different region from the red tape involved in reaching Sikkim. The Indian government has designated this a restricted area, and tourists need a permit to get there (*see below*). Paperwork in order, your starting point is Siliguri. This is the main trading point in Bengal for traffic from Darjeeling, Sikkim and the kingdom of Bhutan. From here you board a bus or hire a taxi-van and gradually twist your way up into the clean greenery of the mountains. Gangtok, the Sikkimese capital, is about three and a half hours away.

The sharp twists of the mountain road are painted with signs in English encouraging safe driving – "Be gentle with the curve" and so forth. Towards Gangtok the signwriters had got carried away with their own moral rectitude: "If you judge people you won't have time to love them" was emblazoned on a particularly perilous hairpin bend. "Imagination is better than wisdom" said another, as if challenging drivers not to get distracted by pondering quite what this means.

The mottos are painted by a branch of the Indian army whose job it is to make and maintain the roads. And there is a great deal of military activity here: Sikkim is a sensitive area, you are informed, because of its border with Tibet.

Indeed, travelling north to Yumthang, a particularly high and beautiful valley about a day's drive from Gangtok, you pass truckloads of khaki vehicles and squads of crisply laundered soldiers. As the area is only about 35km from the Tibetan frontier, visitors need (another) special permit to get there and are not allowed to bring cameras. We spent the night at the nearby village of Lachung and got up at dawn the next day to catch the mountains at their best, snowclad peaks glowing in the early-morning light. As we drove up to the valley through a trio of army checkpoints, a Sikh contingent was out on exercise, doing press-ups by the side of the road – turbans neatly in place, moustaches immaculately twiddled and not a hair out of place, despite their exertions. I couldn't help wondering if the corresponding Chinese border guards were as wonderfully well groomed – and numerous.

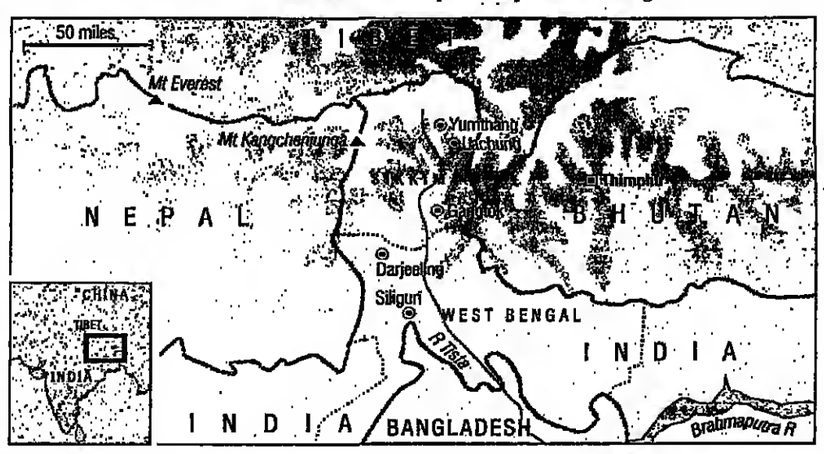
A Chinese threat is certainly a reason for Indian government sensitivity over Sikkim, but by no means the only one. "In 1959 the Chinese invaded Tibet," I was told at one monastery. "And in 1975 the Indians took over Sikkim." There was much international criticism at the time. For centuries, Sikkim had been a proud, independent kingdom and its *chogyal*, or ruler, embodied a leadership that was intertwined with the spiritual history of the nation. The Indians took over in the name of democracy that en route was translated into union with themselves.

Their recent political involvement started in 1947 when, on independence, they inherited British treaties with Sikkim – largely over border control. Although during the 1962 Sino-Indian border wars the Chinese respected the frontiers of the Himalayan kingdoms of Nepal, Sikkim and Bhutan, the Indians were left deeply suspicious. By the early Seventies the government of Indira Gandhi was displaying distinct designs on Sikkim. And in 1975, amid democracy demonstrations in Gangtok, the Gandhi government imposed a referendum with the result that Sikkim was annexed as the 22nd state of India. The army surrounded the *chogyal*'s palace, stripped him of his powers and placed him under house arrest for two years.

Accusations flew that the Indian government had simply imported the demonstrators from Bengal, had considerably swelled the population with a flood of foreign workers (who had little regard for the independence of Sikkim), and had in any case rigged the elections.

Mass immigration had, in fact, been started last century by the British, who introduced a large wave of Nepalese labourers. The Indians continued the practice and the number of incomers continued to rise, dramatically so after 1975. Today the Sikkimese amount to less than one-quarter of the population of their own country. And heavenly though the Sikkimese monasteries are, Buddhism, too, is in the minority – about 60 per cent of the population are Hindu.

Yet for the Sikkimese, the outlook is not entirely bleak. If their culture is to survive, so must their religion and their monasteries. And to this end the current *chogyal*, who inherited his father's title (but not his former political power) has set it train a movement to revive and preserve Buddhist practices. Meantime the Sikkimese themselves keep an interested watch on matters in neighbouring Bhutan, which has recently seen a similar tidal wave of incoming immigrants. "The Bhutanese have been very frightened by what happened to us," I was told in Gangtok. "In terms of demographics?" I wanted to know. "Not just that. Ultimately, there's always the possibility of another takeover."



Sikkim and Bhutan fact file

Getting there
British visitors need visas for India: these cost £13 (for three months) from the Visa Section, Indian High Commission, India House, Aldwych, London WC2B 4NA (0891 880880 for recorded information). Permits for Sikkim (15 days) are reasonably easy to obtain, at no extra charge, from the Indian High Commission in London or, in India, from the permit office in Siliguri.

Flights: Harriet O'Brien paid £408 (including tax) for a flight from Heathrow to Delhi with Lufthansa, booked through Trailfinders (0171-938 3366). Internal flights to Bagdogra on Indian Airlines or Jet Airways cost around £70 extra each way. There's also a train to Siliguri but you need plenty of time for this.

Getting around
Travel within Sikkim is fairly restricted. Visitors are permitted to travel west as far as Pelling (visiting the monasteries of Tashiding and Pemayangtse en route). For journeys further west and to the north you may only travel in groups of four foreigners and you need a special permit. Travel agents in Gangtok are helpful and numerous – and will look after the paperwork as well as teaming tourists and arranging transport and accommodation.

Accommodation
Guest houses, offering "fooding and lodging", are generally clean and comfortable. Harriet O'Brien paid 500 rupees (£8.70) a night at the Anola Hotel on MG Marg in Gangtok (03592 23238), and at the Norbu Gang in Pelling, west Sikkim (03593 50566, similar prices). Bring a hot-water bottle; most places are unheated and get very cold.

When to go
April and May are prime months to see the Himalayan flowers in their full glory – entire hillsides covered with wild rhododendron blooms. The tourist season ends at the start of June (when the monsoon begins) and resumes in October. December to February it gets jolly chilly at night.

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something to declare

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MTV world is a homogenised world of jump-cuts, (not so) Steadicam and a spaghetti of different film stocks. Dizzying and dazzling and roughly about nothing, it's an experience which can only be described as "intense".

In the main section, presenter Dan Roland explores the complex world of Cuba, where the last bastion of communism rubs suntan lotion into the shoulders of exploitative tourism. Dan comes to the conclusion that this is a bad thing.

The programme travels to India to share the insights into Delhi of the lead singer of Kula Shaker, Crispian Mills. "Welcome to smelly Delhi," he says. Crispian concludes that Delhi is "intense".

In Israel, the model looks of Christof, a German backpacker, are given the full black-and-white treatment as the film crew follow him on his "Fab Fortnight". Christof climbs trees and does some work with fish and chicken on a Kibbutz and gets drunk a lot. By the way, Christof reckons Jerusalem is "intense".

The MTV World Tour accomplishes in half an hour what the UN has spent fifty years fumbling towards: it levels out all cultures.

MTV World Tour will be broadcast every Saturday, Sunday and Monday for the next five weeks

Anthony Thornton

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Austria: "Holidaymakers may purchase either weekly or two-monthly discs. The cost of the weekly disc is ATS 70 (about £3.60). The two-monthly disc, which is valid for two consecutive calendar months, will cost ATS 150 (about £7.70)." – Austrian National Tourist Office (0171-629 0461).

Czech Republic: "A motorway toll coupon of Kcs 400 (approx £10) per car and per calendar year is payable at the Czech border crossing on arrival. Failure to comply may mean being fined by the Czech police." – Cedok brochure.

Switzerland: "If you're going to be motoring in or through Switzerland, you need to obtain a motoring tax disc called 'vignette'. This annual tax of 40 Swiss francs is levied on all cars and motorcycles using the Swiss motorways. An additional fee of 40 Swiss francs applies to trailers and caravans. This tax, which is available at border crossings, can also be purchased by sending a cheque for £18 to Switzerland Tourism, Swiss Centre, Swiss Court, London W1V 8EE." – Switzerland Tourism.

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Catch the first flight out of London City airport, and you can travel to any Air UK destination for £59 return (plus tax), with no restrictions on the homebound flight.

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The deal will suit business travellers to Holland or Scotland who don't mind arriving at their destination in mid-morning, as long as they save a fortune by doing so.

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Looking down on Creation

"Gross national happiness is more important than gross national product." So said Jigme Singye Wangchuk, King of Bhutan. It was this statement which first made me curious about a mysterious mountain kingdom squeezed between India and Tibet.

The more I found out, the more fascinating it became. As with Tibet, Bhutan's rulers believed in keeping the foreigner out, which means that the country is virtually untouched by the modern world. It is a medieval land of ancient *dzong* (monastery-fortresses) and archers, and even today the people wear the traditional national costume – by law. They are of Tibetan stock, and their houses are like beautifully built Swiss chalets with huge eaves and intricate Buddhist motifs to ward off demons.

It is a stupendously beautiful country. The southern foothills are covered with tropical jungle; the central valleys are highly cultivated and separated from one another by high ridges. The mountains to the north, part of the Himalayan chain, are mostly unmapped, unnamed and unclimbed; many are held sacred, or are gods in their own right.

The king allowed Westerners in for the first time in 1974 to witness his coronation, and since then very limited tourism has been allowed. Whereas the Himalayan kingdom of Nepal, to the west, had 250,000 visitors last year, Bhutan allowed in only 4,000, with about 1,000 of those going trekking around the interior. By stipulating that each tourist had to spend a minimum of $200 a day, and that they travelled in groups of more than five, Bhutan ensured that the maximum foreign exchange entered the country, together with the minimum foreign disturbance. People end up paying more than £3,500 for a three-week walking holiday. Considering the environmental damage done to parts of Nepal by mass tourism, the King chose wisely.

I was fortunate enough to persuade a tour company to send me there as a trek-leader. Each group of Westerners walking in the interior is generally accompanied by such a person, whose role is to liaise between the local trekking crew and the clients. The trek-leader has to sort out airport and hotel check-ins, and be a general troubleshooter and an all-round good egg who makes sure everyone is happy. A sort of Butlin's Redcoat in climbing boots.

Flying into Bhutan is an adventure in itself. You board a miniature aeroplane in Delhi, and drone over the plains of northern India. Beyond the pilot's head you see the Himalayas rear up in slow motion, and soon he announces that he can see Everest. You strain your eyes into the icy glitter. Then the plane begins a sharp descent. It banks round tightly, skims a ridge and suddenly lunges at a tiny airstrip. There is an appalling cacophony from the engines, and you are down in the capital, Thimphu.

I had been briefed for this moment. I raced down the steps and legged it for a small wooden garden shed on the airfield perimeter. With 10 people to clear through immigration I wanted to be first. As I received the last stamp I noticed with grim satisfaction some other poor sod of a trek-leader, fists full of passports, trying to fight off his clients. We were going to follow a route that was graded "strenuous". It went through the very heart of the country and along Bhutan's border with Tibet. I fancied doing this because I wanted a close look at some of the unclimbed mountains. The motives of my clients were more complicated. In age they ranged from 40 to 58, in occupation from company director to bookkeeper. For one of them it was the trip of a lifetime; for others, I suspect, it was a way of resolving some deep personal questions.

Our journey began at the extraordinary Taksang Monastery, or Tiger's Nest. It is attached, more like a swallow's nest, to a 4,000ft precipice. This is where the Guru Padma Sambhava flew to Tibet on the back of a tiger to defeat demons trying to oppose the flow of Buddhism into Bhutan. We were gazing at this building, which resembles a Weston-super-Mare guest-house bolted to a cliff, when I ventured the suggestion that as tourists we ultimately destroyed what we had come to see. We were in the country as a privileged vanguard of what I fear will become a torrent, and this thought had been bugging me ever since we'd landed. The homily was greeted with a stony silence.

Tiger's nest: Taksang Monastery clings to a 4,000ft precipice STILL PICTURES/MARK EDWARDS

And so began the trek proper. It's a congenial life. You are woken soon after dawn and given a steaming cup of tea. Shortly afterwards, as you digest the view of pink mountains through the tent door, an aluminium washing-bowl of hot water is placed outside your tent. Once washed and dressed, you pack a kit-bag and day-pack. The kit bag goes on one of 26 ponies, the day-pack on you. Then, while you eat breakfast at a table outside, the camp-staff take down the tents and load the animals.

Then the trials of trek-leadership start. As I was warned, two of the clients – usually the younger men – will decide to walk as fast as they can along the trail to prove that they are tougher than the others. They then reach a fork, and inevitably choose the path less travelled. They get lost and attempt to rejoin the correct track by traversing a steep and dangerous ridge that intervenes. Eventually they stumble into camp well after dark, bloody and exhausted.

Walking in early morning in Bhutan is enthralling. For anyone who likes gardening it is a constant delight; two of the clients were amateur botanists and the air was regularly split with cries of pleasure as they spotted a tree-hanging orchid or a familiar conservatory plant. Lunch might be had sitting on a natural lawn next to a river, or amongst the rocks on a high pass. Another three hours' walking and the night's camp-site is reached, and usually tea is ready. I loved the way the ponies rolled on the ground with joy when their loads were removed.

Trekkers are so few and the country so uninhabited that we were able to have fires most nights. This simply isn't possible in Nepal, a country ravaged by deforestation. One night we camped at the remote village of Laya. The people here are famous for their yak-hair clothes and curious conical bamboo hats. And as I listened that night to the extraordinary singing of the local girls – a strange, hypnotic threnody – I felt oddly dislocated back into a medieval land. Forget time travel, I thought; the past is here, now, and in Bhutan.

Graham Hoyland

Halfway through our conversation, the Consul sent me all the way to the bank. I wasn't laughing, mind. The prospect of a visa was receding with each searching question about my intentions and resources. Being told to scurry off in search of flimsy proof of financial probity seemed a final indignity. But, studying the bank statement intently, he concluded that I was unlikely single-handedly to undermine society.

After a percussive flurry of rubber-stamping, I emerged with my prize: the right to visit the Co-operative Republic of Guyana – confidante of the USSR.

Seven years on, the bureaucratic tangles for travellers to the Soviet Union (plus its friends and distant relations) have unravelled. The queues outside embassies in the "Bayswater triangle" in West London have dwindled. Prospective visitors to Poland and Hungary, the Czech Republic and Guyana no longer need visas.

Simon Calder

Even at the handsome Russian embassy, the officials began to smile and phase out the traditional "No".

Yes, you can have a visa without a detailed, pre-paid itinerary. Yes, if you need to fly to Moscow tomorrow you can have a visa today. The biggest country on earth opened up to the world's largest industry.

On Wednesday, the Cold War broke out again. A fax from the Russian Consulate-General in Edinburgh revealed that "tit-for-tat" diplomacy has spread to tourism. The problem is Britain's attitude to Russian visitors. Until the collapse of the USSR, restriction on Soviet tourists were academic. Now, thousands of the new Russian *nouveaux riches* want to visit the West. London is top of the average wish-list. But to get a UK visa often requires a visit to the British Embassy in Moscow. For people who live in Vladivostok, 6,000 miles east, an interview in the Russian capital is not awfully convenient. And even after the one-week train, there is no guarantee that the precious visa will be issued.

The Russians are set to give British travellers a taste of the same medicine. As well as your passport and three mugshots, you must supply "a confirmation issued by a Russian tourist company accredited by the Foreign Ministry".

Even if you clear this mountain of paperwork, "The Consulate General reserves the right to call the applicants for an interview and to ask questions dealing with personal, financial, business issues as well as with your Russian contacts and partners".

A bottle of vodka awaits the reader who reports the best dialogue with the Consul. Meanwhile, I commend a visit to the now genuinely Co-operative Republic of Guyana.

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A corner of London that is forever green

Anna Pavord finds an oasis of self-help

Because gardening teaches you the value of the long view and the virtues of stoicism (plants are great stoics), gardeners generally are not militant – even in their own defence. But when Islington Council withdrew an annual £12,000 grant from the Culpepper Community Garden in north London, the local people who garden there fought hard to defend the patch that provides them (and anyone else who wants to walk there) with a restorative touch of green in an area that desperately needs it.

The garden, next door to a children's playground, is at the south end of Cloudesley Road. Over the railings, you look into a patchwork of tiny gardens, each no more than 10ft by 12ft, growing an extraordinary mixture of trees, fruit, flowers and vegetables. One plot is full of comfrey, grown to make liquid feed. Another has a mouthwatering selection of broccoli. A third has sedum, lavender, euphorbia and daffodils, each daffodil surrounded with scraps of red brick.

Like allotment sites, this community garden speaks volumes for the inventiveness of gardeners. But this is different from an allotment site. It is gardened by individuals, but done for the pleasure of all. And £12,000 seems a cheap way for Islington Council to fix the patch. They'd pay three times as much to garden it under council tender, as public parks are.

I asked Ken Standing, chairman of Culpepper's management committee, how Islington's grant was spent. Most of it is used to pay a garden worker, Nicola Reynolds, who looks after the bits between the plots and, by her presence, cuts down on the vandalism that is a constant irritation. Some money is needed to repair paths and fences. Some was spent on the sturdy compost bins that stand behind the community hut.

There's no vetting of members. Anybody who lives nearby can ask for a plot, as long as they do not have a garden. Mr Standing said they had Italian gardeners, Spanish and Portuguese. That explained why there were so many good vegetables there. Especially calahrese. And red-leaved chicory growing with marigolds.

One tiny patch was rather grandly planted with an evergreen *Magnolia grandiflora*. That was worth £6,000 as a heart lift on its own. There were amelanchiers in delicate blossom, and a fine alder tree growing by the hut. Over the brick wall that closes off the garden from Cloudesley Road, a sweet-scented *Clematis armandii* flung long, voluptuous trails.

So what's the fate of the garden now? The Culpepper gardeners won a victory in persuading Islington not to dump them altogether, but the council has halved their grant to £6,000. The management committee is loth to put up garden rents (at present £10 a year) because they don't want the place to become, in Mr Standing's phrase "an inward-looking, garden clubby sort of place." The search for alternative funding is on.

If you would like to contribute, go to the Culpepper Community Garden plant sale on Sunday 27 April, 11am-1pm. To join the community garden, call 0171-833 3951.

Communal cause: Culpepper Garden is a shrine to the inventiveness of gardeners PHOTOGRAPH: PHILIP MEECH

Scented and frilly yellow dancers

I'm not surprised to find that in the 10 years this column has appeared, I've never written about daffodils. What loon would want to write about daffodils when they could be writing about tulips? But, in the interests of fair play, they ought to have an outing. And, of course, they are a great deal easier to please than tulips. It's one of the most irritating things about them in our garden. They swell and increase mightily, while my precious tulips dwindle. Most of them (except the "tazzetta" types such as 'Cheerfulness') seem to enjoy the damp, heavy ground.

It didn't surprise me either that, although I keep saying that I'm not mad about them, there are more than 20 different kinds flowering at the moment in the garden.

The ones with a swoony smell are best. That puts 'Quail' near the top of the list, along with other jonquils such as 'Trevithian' and the much tinier 'Baby Moon' which grows to 6in or 7in tall. The original wild jonquils are natives of Spain and Portugal and grow in damp meadows along the river valleys of the Douro, the Tejo and the Guadalquivir. 'Quail' has a particularly sweet smell, and is a clear, bright yellow, the cup exactly the same colour as the frill around it. There can be two or three flowers together on a stem, about 12-14in tall. I have them growing in clumps between cones of box in a narrow border.

'Trevithian' and 'Quail' are both flowering now. The smaller 'Single Jonquil', more like the wild species, comes later this month, fabulously scented, with a clear yellow flower well set against grassy, rich green foliage.

'Thalia' one of the Triandus narcissus flowering now, is elegant with its creamy flowers and long-fingered petals, but it has no smell. It lights up a dark patch under a spreading arm of ceanothus, but I wouldn't plant it next to a path. There, you need something like the creamy-flowered 'Cheerfulness', which grows to about 14in high and is beautifully scented. So is 'Geranium', another of this family, with a pure white frill round a small, glowing orange centre.

For naturalising in grass, you need daffodils that look as though they might be growing there of their own accord. That means avoiding the monster yellow trumpet daffodils such as 'Golden Harvest' and 'Unsurpassable', which look as though they would break a bone in your foot if they happened to flop on to it. Avoid fancy, orchid-flowering types such as 'Cassata', too, in this situation. Choose instead old-fashioned poeticus narcissi such as 'Actaea', which flowers from mid-April onwards, and 'Pheasant Eye' which picks up the baton in May, to give a long, continuous season of flowering.

Where clumps of daffodils have stopped flowering, you need to lift and divide them, replanting smaller groups of the bulbs in ground refreshed with a couple of handfuls of bonemeal. Water the clumps well when they have been resettled. The best time to do this is between July and September when top growth has died down (and you've forgotten where the clumps were).

Remember that the best flowers are usually produced in the second year after planting, though the greatest number of flowers will probably follow in the third year after planting.

SEE daffodils at Brodie Castle, Forres, Moray, Inverness-shire, Mon-Sat 11am-5.30pm, Sun 1.30pm-5.30pm, admission £3.60; Bainton House, Stamford, Cambs, tomorrow 2pm-5.30pm, admission £1.50; Killerton Garden, near Exeter, Devon, daily 10.30am-dusk, admission £3.20; Algars Mill, Iron Acton, near Bristol, tomorrow 2pm-6pm, admission £1.50; Bramdean House, Bramdean, Hants, tomorrow 2pm-5pm, admission £2.
BUY daffodils in autumn from Ballydorn Bulb Farm, Ballydorn Hill, Killinchy, Newtownards, Co Down BT23 6QB (01238 541250); Brian Duncan Daffodils, Knawehead, 15 Ballynahatty Rd, Omagh, Co Tyrone BT78 1PN (01662 242931); Copford Bulbs, Dorsetts, Birch Rd, Copford, Colchester, Essex CO6 1DR (01206 330008).
READ 'Narcissus, a Guide to Wild Daffodils' by John Blanchard (Alpine Garden Society £22). Knowing how the various species grow in the wild gives you the best possible guide to making daffodils happy in the garden.
JOIN The Daffodil Society, Sec: Mrs Jackie Petherbridge, The Meadows, Puxton, Nr Weston-super-Mare, N Somerset BS24 6TF (01934 833641), subscription £5 a year.

ANNA PAVORD

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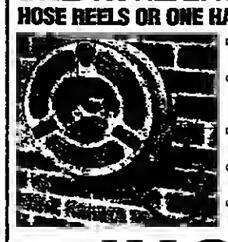
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Weekend work

Sponge the leaves of conservatory-grown camellias to clean off sooty mould. Soft soap is best for this job. Remove old wood and overcrowded shoots from indoor abutilons. Start canna roots into growth in boxes of moist compost. They give a magnificently tropical air to a mixed border, but, like dahlias, can't go out until all danger of frost has passed.

If you have a new lawn in mind, resist the temptation to skimp on preparation. Rake soil several times in different directions to get a level surface. Get rid of all stones and shuffle over the soil in your boots to tread down the surface. Choose a seed mixture to suit the site.

Think about stakes now.. Letting nature take its course is all very well, but nature did not invent top-heavy delphiniums. Single bamboo canes are fine for these cathedral spires. Use twiggy pea sticks for plump plants such as Michaelmas daisies, and tall half-moon stakes for shrub roses such as "Ispahan".

Continue to sow seeds of annuals to flower in the garden this summer. "Full Sun" (Suttons, 95p) is a classic huge yellow sunflower with heads 12in across. "Velvet Queen" (Thompson & Morgan, £1.59) has flowers of a sumptuous mahogany.

CUTTINGS

This week: focus on special plant collections

The National Council for the Conservation of Plants and Gardens has been extraordinarily successful in encouraging national collections of garden plants. There are enormous benefits in having such collections. Selfishly, of course, we think first of the pleasure of being able to go and look at them. But collection owners also do a great deal of work in unravelling wrong names and in saving some of the old cultivars from disappearing altogether from cultivation.

Now three of them have published booklets about their collections. Denis Bradshaw has been building up his honeysuckle collection for 100 years and now has about 100 different kinds. His 24-page booklet (£3.95) includes information on looking after and pruning honeysuckles. Sylvia Norton has written about her collection of lathyrus, cousins of the sweet-pea (£3.95 for a 30-page booklet). John and Jean Ainsworth's 54-page booklet (£4.95) is about the family of sarracenias, North American pitcher plants.

The booklets are all available by post from the NCCPG at The Pines, RHS Garden, Wisley, Woking, Surrey GU23 6QP. Add 50p for postage and packing.

Denis Bradshaw's honeysuckle collection is held at J Bradshaw & Son, Busbeyfields Nursery, Herne, Herne Bay, Kent CT6 7LJ (01227 375415) and is open Tues-Sat, 10am-5pm, admission £1. Sylvia Norton's collection of lathyrus is at Weavers Cottage, 35 Streetly End, West Wickham, Cambridge CB1 6RP (01223 892399) and is open by appointment only during the sweet pea season. The Ainsworth's collection of more than 120 pitcher plants is at Bank Farm, Bank Head Lane, Bamber Bridge, Preston, PR5 6YR (01772 321557) and is open by appointment only, admission £1.

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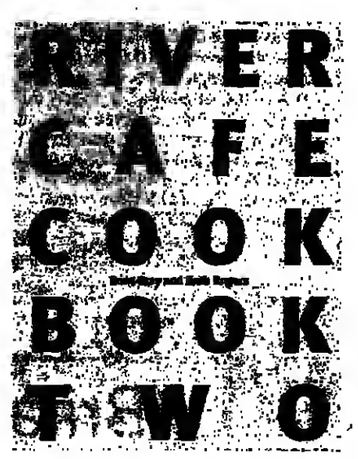

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all consuming

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ROAD TEST Mitsubishi Galant

By John Simister

Japan turns Teutonic

Mitsubishi Galant. Yes, it's all new, as Japanese cars are every four years or so, but I bet you'll find it hard to picture what a new Galant might look like without the prompt of a picture. After all, what we're talking about is just some more grey Japanese porridge, isn't it? Toyota Carina, Nissan Primera, Mazda 626, Honda Accord, Mitsubishi Galant – none of them exactly leaps out and thrusts its personality at you.

Maybe that's because Japan's economic miracle is abating, production costs are high, profits are disappearing and, more than ever, Japanese car-makers are playing safe, conservative and – the B-word that every UK importer of Japanese cars detests – bland. But wait. See that chiselled nose with its chamfered corners? Not much sign of the default-design inane grin here. See that tidy tail, also rather pleasingly chiselled? It's almost BMW-like. See that curving rear roof-line, the cut of the rear pillars, the broad-shouldered rear wheel arches? Germanic again.

Here's a breath of fresh air: a Japanese car with an identity of its own, and a rather European one as it happens. It's also slightly bigger than most of its mainstream compatriots outlined above, virtually Volvo S70-size, an upmarket shift made possible by the recent arrival of the Dutch-built, Mondeo-confronting Mitsubishi Carisma (a car whose identity and aura are definitely not eponymous, never mind any solecisms of spelling).

Talking of which, Mitsubishi is backing a new "Galant" driving course to promote courtesy on the road as well as the new Galant. This is laudable, if slightly tacky; fortunately, the car is rather good, too. In Japan it gets the new, high-economy, Gasoline Direct Injection engine I described in these pages a few weeks ago, but for Europe that engine is Carisma-bound instead. (It's destined for Volvo's S40 and V40, too, because these cars and the Carisma are fruits of a Mitsubishi/Volvo joint venture.)

So European Galants come with either a 2.0-litre, four-cylinder engine of 134bhp or, as in the car I tested, a new 2.5-litre V6 which delivers 161 bhp. My car also came with the optional automatic transmission, air-conditioning and leather trim, which together push the price up to £23,540 on the road, but V6s start at £20,610 and you can have a 2.0-litre for £17,210. Estate-car versions are available for an extra £800, but as yet Britain is to be denied the turbocharged, four-wheel-drive, 280bhp VR-4 version offered in Japan. "It's too manic," Shunji Takeshita, the Galant project manager, told me.

There's nothing very adventurous about the Galant's interior, but it's well made out of high-quality materials, and is pleasing enough to the eye provided you don't look too closely at the fake wood. The doors shut with a solid "thunk", the front seats adjust electrically, and the whole car has a feeling of substance that the smaller Carisma lacks.

The impression stays with you as you move off, too, because the V6 engine is both quiet and muscular, and the automatic transmission, which adapts its gear-change strategy to what it considers to be your style of driving over the past few miles, is responsive without being snatchy. It suits the engine well, helping brisk progress to be smooth and serene.

Supple, "multilink" suspension helps here, too: it soaks up humps effectively, while keeping firm control of unwanted lurching and heaving to the benefit of both the occupants' comfort and the precision of the handling. The Galant corners confidently without drifting wide or losing its balance, and the steering feels reassuringly weighty at speed.

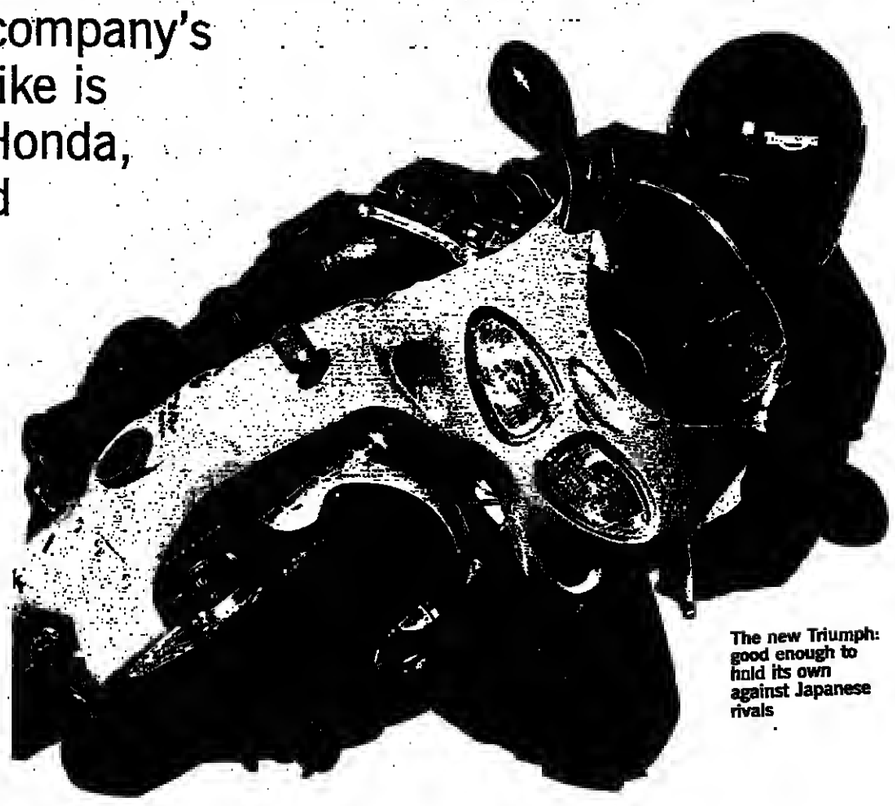
I like this car. It looks good, it feels all-of-a-piece, it's satisfying to drive, and it has definite stirrings of personality. Makes a change from all those haughty Germans, too. Just a shame it has a silly name.

Mitsubishi Galant 2.5 V6

Specifications
Price: £23,540 OTR with auto transmission and powered leather seats.
Engine: 2,498cc, V6, 24 valves, 161bhp at 5,750rpm; four-speed automatic gearbox, front-wheel drive.
Performance: top speed 134mph, 0-60 in 9.4sec.
Fuel consumption: 25-30mpg.

Rivals
Ford Mondeo 2.5 V6 Ghia X, £22,810 OTR
Smaller, cheaper, quicker than Galant, with less comfort and less sense of occasion.
Peugeot 406 V6, £23,640 OTR Very rapid, terrific handling, wonderfully comfortable; a Peugeot to beat the German icons.
Volvo S70 2.5 20V CD, £26,215 OTR
Biggest and most expensive of these rivals, five-cylinder engine sounds good; build quality is not great.
Vauxhall Vectra V6 CDX, £21,690 OTR
Rapid and reasonably roomy, but the least fun to drive of these rivals. Decent but forgettable.
Volkswagen Passat 2.8 V6 synchro, £21,841 OTR Still a couple of months away, even though price fixed, but quick, capable, well designed; 4-wheel-drive VW is the best bargain here.

The reborn company's new sports bike is challenging Honda, writes Roland Brown



The new Triumph: good enough to hold its own against Japanese rivals

Wheeling back in Triumph

The recent news that Triumph's new T595 Daytona sports bike outsold Honda's mighty contender, the CBR900RR FireBlade, in the first three months of this year will have come as no surprise to enthusiasts who have tried to buy one – the British bike is sold out for several months to come.

Such was the response when the 995cc three-cylinder road burner was revealed last autumn that the Triumph was guaranteed a high ranking in the sales charts even before it had turned a wheel in anger.

Why the excitement? The T595 – the factory code name – is the first Hinckley-built bike to compete head-on with the Japanese and Italian firms in the large-capacity super-sports class, motorcycling's most glamorous and hard-fought arena. More to the point, the new British challenger is proving itself good enough to hold its own against the FireBlade and Ducati's 916.

Until now, Triumph's remarkable rise since being relaunched six years ago had been based on fine but conservative models that shared many components, including their frame and most engine parts. This kept production costs down, and allowed Triumph to expand its range quickly. It also prevented the specialisation required to make a competitive sports bike.

The T595 Daytona is significant not just because it is Triumph's best bike yet but because it represents a decision by John Bloor, the firm's boss, to attack the super-sports market with a purpose-built machine for the first time. Even so, Triumph's designers quickly whipped off the fairings to create a second new model, the aggressively styled T509 Speed Triple.

Raising the stakes in such a high-profile way was a bold move for a small company (Triumph employs 450 people), but so far the gamble is paying off. With the 1,550 machines allocated to the British market before August all accounted for, the T595 looks set to be one of the year's best-selling bikes of any category – not bad for a machine that costs almost £10,000. Export demand is high, too.

Amid the euphoria, it barely seems possible that just seven years ago the British motorcycle industry was apparently dead. From BSA to Vincent, the great names had folded one by one. The old Meriden-based Triumph firm had struggled on longer than most, but eventually succumbed to the Japanese-led invasion.

Then Bloor, a Derbyshire builder who had bought the bankrupt Triumph from the liquidator in 1983, revealed a hi-tech new factory and the range of three- and four-cylinder superbikes that his firm had been developing in secret. Few could understand why a successful businessman who didn't even ride a motorbike should sink tens of millions of pounds into a doomed industry. But Bloor, 53, hadn't gone from plasterer to multi-millionaire by accident. He had spotted a gap in the market for a high-quality, mass-produced British motorcycle – and has delivered just that.

Bloor's ride has not been easy. Triumph's first bikes quickly gained a reputation for reliable if unspectacular engineering, and sold well in Britain. But progress in the important German market was slow, and Triumph's four-cylinder models were too reminiscent of Japanese bikes of a few years earlier.

One of Triumph's assets is its ability to react quickly. The firm shifted emphasis towards the more distinctive triples, revamped its German network, improved existing bikes and introduced new ones. Production has risen steadily, from 2,000 bikes in 1991 to last year's total of 14,000, of which 70 per cent were exported. And now Bloor has decided Triumph is big enough for a serious super-sports challenge.

Enter the handsome T595 Daytona, with its powerful three-cylinder engine, its innovative frame of oval-section aluminium tubes, and its swoopy all-yellow (or black) bodywork. The 995cc, 12-valve motor is fuel-injected and tuned with the help of Lotus Engineering. It produces a maximum of 128bhp – slightly more than the 916 and FireBlade. The chassis is light, low and fitted with top-quality suspension and brakes.

The result is sensational – a thrillingly fast machine with its own distinct character. Its riding position is unashamedly aggressive, with low handlebars and rearset footrests. The engine is flexible, smooth and hugely powerful; the French-made fuel-injection system gives instant response to hurl the bike towards its 160mph top speed. Only a slight flat-spot at 5000rpm and an occasionally notchy six-speed gearbox earn less than top marks.

Handling is excellent, too. The Daytona's blend of light weight, rigid frame, taut suspension and well-chosen chassis geometry makes the triple slightly less manoeuvrable than the FireBlade, but correspondingly more able.

The naked T509 Speed Triple, which combines the T595's chassis with a detuned, 107bhp engine of the original 885cc capacity, is itself a quick and eye-catching machine. At £8,299 the Triple is considerably less expensive than the £9,649 Daytona, and will not be the only model to benefit from technology developed for the sportster. Rumours are already circulating of others under development.

This year's production will total around 15,000., the highest yet. In the near future Bloor plans to move to a larger factory on an adjacent site– although he says he won't build more than 25,000 bikes, preferring to keep Triumph small and flexible. When you consider that 10 years ago the British bike industry's total production was close to zero, even that would represent an amazing achievement.

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Britain needs Power at its elbow

Reliability was once the single most important factor when buying a new car. This is hardly surprising; after all, if the car failed to perform its primary duty – getting from A to B – then the fetching styling, the low price and the shiny red paint job wouldn't really be of much use. Back in the bad old days of BL, when British cars spent as much time on the hard shoulder as they did in the fast lane, reliability was crucial. It's one reason why BL sales crumbled. It's what gave the Japanese their foothold in Europe.

Now, it's changed. The Japanese have given the world the assumption of mechanical reliability. Everyone else has tried hard to match them. In many cases, they've come close. In all cases, they've improved. If a car fails on the road, it fails in the showroom. There's just no room for the old BL excuses these days – which is why car reliability is no longer the main buying factor. All cars are reliable even if, like equality, some are more reliable than others. Instead, apart from one's own past experience, style is now the number one factor when buying a car.

Gavin Green

Yet as a recent plethora of consumer studies have just shown, the differences between the makers of the most reliable cars and the least reliable are still meaningful. As the strugglers try to catch the Japanese, so the Japanese – in turn – just keep getting better.

The best publicised study, on owner satisfaction and car quality, was done by the American consumer group J D Power in conjunction with *Top Gear*, the television programme and magazine. Viewers and readers of two-year-old cars were urged to respond and, in turn, J D Power sent out questionnaires. There were 16,498 responses. It showed that Subaru was top manufacturer, that the Toyota Corolla was the single model that gave owners most satisfaction, and that big sellers such as the Ford Escort, Vauxhall Astra and Ford Mondeo languished near the bottom – even though 80 per cent of M-reg Ford buyers still found themselves satisfied.

Predictably, those makers who did badly accused J D Power of unfairness. Those manufacturers who did well took out ads. The main accusation is that J D Power uses self-selectors – in other words, people asked to be surveyed, not vice versa. Thus it was not a random survey. Some marketeers will tell you that makes it flawed.

A month or two back, *What Car?* – *Top Gear*'s major magazine rival – had its own survey done in conjunction with the vehicle leasing company Lex. This one sampled 73,000 fleet cars. It rated Mitsubishi as the maker of the most reliable vehicles, followed by BMW, Mercedes and Honda. There were some massive variations compared with J D Power – Fiat did well in Lex but badly with J D Power – even though, broadly, Japanese makers again did best. Although the Lex survey undoubtedly helps consumers, its main failing is obvious: it did not ask the opinions of private buyers. Nor did it take into account experiences with dealers, one of the key aspects of J D Power, and a major factor in owner satisfaction.

In July, *Which?* comes out with its annual car reliability survey. This, as with the other two, usually tends to show the primacy of the Japanese, and the failings of Ford, Rover and Vauxhall. These surveys may be inconclusive in some areas, but they're pretty emphatic in others. If you seek solid satisfaction from your car, and your dealer, you're best advised to buy Japanese and, in particular, Toyota, Honda, Subaru or Mitsubishi.

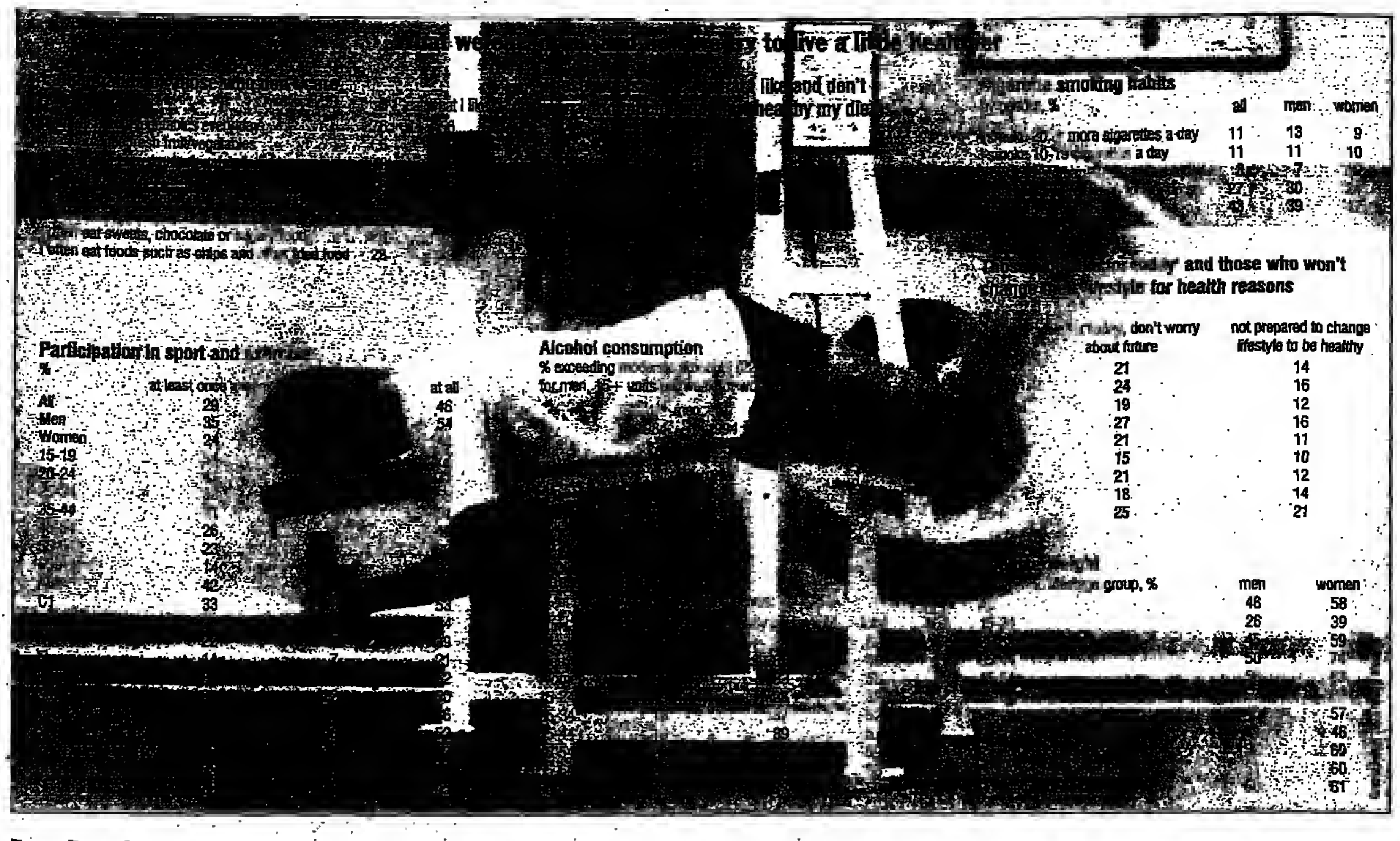
There's little doubt, though, that Britain still lacks the definitive car-buying satisfaction guide. In America, they have it – and it's also done by J D Power. There, makers await the results just as keenly as they await sales data. Indeed, the latter often follows the former. Good J D Power ratings in America can help make a marque (it contributed to Lexus's rise), while poor results can kill them (it helped to get rid of Yugo, and oot before time).

The key difference in America is that they don't need people volunteering to be surveyed in order to build a database of owners. In America, J D Power, helped by the Freedom of Information Act, buys the names and addresses of the vehicle owners direct from the US equivalent of the DVLA, the state-run DMV (Department of Motor Vehicles). They then send out questionnaires at random. Responses are invariably much bigger. Typically, 30,000 people respond, double the British rate. More questions can also be asked. In America, buyers are asked specifically about their thoughts on initial quality (after 90 days of ownership and again after one year), as well as longer term satisfaction.

J D Power approached the DVLA back in the early Nineties but was rebuffed. Subsequent approaches have also been made. The answer was again no: the DVLA wanted to preserve the confidentiality of its files. A major consumer service was thus denied us. Mind you, part of me retains a grudging respect for an organisation that refuses to sell its "client" data base. If only my bank were that principled.

هكذا من الأصل

Staying healthy is an uphill fight for mothers. An exclusive report from Debbie Davies



Why living can be so unfair on the fairer sex

It starts so well for women. They're so much more grown-up and intelligent about their heahh lives – good food, exercise, not too much drink, careful on the cigarettes.

Then they get married. Then they have children. Then it all goes wrong.

In their early (15-24) years 71 per cent of women take part in sport and exercise, but by the time they reach 45-54 fewer than one in three are doing so.

More than half of womeo under 25 try new health products. This does not occur to two out of three men. Women resist fatty foods and sweets far more determinedly than men in their teens and twenties, and are far more likely to eat fresh fruit and vegetables than men. But with the arrival of children, women's resistance is eroded.

It may well be that women can justifiably claim better dietary habits than men throughout their lives, hut the main beneficiaries of their ability to choose a better diet appear to be their partner and their children. According to a report ioto healthy lifestyles published by Miotel, the market research company, women are generally more likely to eat fresh fruit and vegetables regularly, and to keep down the amount of fat in their diet, than men.

Only once they pass the age of 65 do women express a greater fondness for fish and chips and fried foods than men, and at no stage in their lives does their consumption of red meat exceed that of men. If they have a dictary weakness, it is for sweets aod chocolates: more women than men say they occasiooally treat themselves to these.

Despite carrying the flag for healthy cating, women are more likely to be obese than men: 16 per cent of women are obese compared to 13 per cent of men, and the trend among womeo is moving away from government targets. At a time when so many appear to jog, cycle or keep fit, women have become fatter and so face increased risk of coronary disease and strokes.

Mintel's proposition is that the stages women progress through as they grow up, marry and become a parent, explain in part why their best intentions do not always translate into health benefits for themselves.

Before marriage and a family, women are the most enthusiastic health coosumers, according to Mintel. This is easy to understand. While boys get muscles, girls grow curves, and although their shapes become more voluptuous, they live in a world of ooe-dimensional screeo and fashioo magazine role models. Consequently, nearly half are keen to try new ways of keeping healthy, and most take exercise. Red meat is definitely off their menu and one in ten claims to be slightly underweight.

Once they acquire a partner, women set about changing their husband's dietary habits for the better. Married men are more likely to eat fresh fruit and vegetables and cut down on red meat consumption, and less likely to eat chips and fatty foods, than men who remain single.

Having childreo marks the next major change in women's dietary habits. As mothers, their concern about healthy eating increases as they take oo the task of moulding a new generation. But io reality, motherhood is more a dietary remoulding process in reverse. Children bring a liking for sausage and chips, followed by ice cream and washed down with fizzy drinks, so parents, especially women, are more likely than those without children to eat sugary and fatty foods on a regular hasis.

Once children have left home, women are keen to regain their old eating habits. Vegetables are back on the menu. More than nine out of ten 45 to 54-year-old women, compared to about three-quarters of those in the 35-44 age group, take care to include fresh fruit and vegetables in their diet on a daily basis. As they approach the mid-fifties, their interest in following a low-fat diet is rekindled: nearly two-thirds of women in the 55-64 age group believe they are overweight.

With age comes resignation. One in five post-family women – a higher proportioo than in any other group – say they are not prepared to change their lifestyle for the sake of their health. For the first time in their adult lives, womeo adopt less healthy diets than men. They become less likely than men to opt for a low-fat diet, and having always eschewed a "live for today" lifestyle, they become as likely as men to adopt this attitude. While men's interest in health advice increases as retirement approaches, women's declines.

There is consolation for women, according to Angela Hughes, editor of the "Healthy Lifestyles Report". "Women do get there first on healthy eating," said Ms Hughes. "Early on they are enthusiastic health consumers, so the culture is already here." They will try new ideas, and by the time they reach motherhood nearly one in five will have taken herbal or homeopathic medicines. Men, by comparison, are latecomers. "Ooly when diet-related health problems start to kick in at age 40-plus do men really take healthy diets on board," said Ms Hughes.

Women come unstuck more because of the ups and downs of life than through holding mistaken beliefs. "Women's lives become very hectic when they reach the family stage," Ms Hughes added. There is not always time to prepare proper meals, and the enticements of fat and sugar increase.

Oscar Wilde, who could resist everything except temptation, would understand.

When women like to get more physical

Men call it sport; women grit their teeth and call it exercise. According to Mintel's research, women are far more likely than men to endure physical activity for the sake of their health than are men, with ooe in three women taking part for health reasons compared to only one in four men.

Women's dedication is reflected in their choice of sports. They are most likely to be found swimming, or attending keep-fit classes, both of which are solitary pastimes. By comparison, men choose team sports – football, rugby and cricket spring to mind – and relegate health and fitness considerations to third place; behind the social aspects and competitive element of their pastime.

Men may be less earnest than womeo in their motivation, but their ability to enjoy their sport makes them better than women at participating regularly. At all ages, bar the 55-60 age group, men are more likely than women to play sport as a matter of course, and this is especially true during middle age when a big decline in female sport and exercise participation occurs as women become mothers.

There is an irony in the way sport is marketed to women, with the focus on fitness rather than enjoyment. According to Mintel, exercise offers women an effective route for tackling obesity. While regular exercisers and those who take little or no exercise admit to similar diets, the two groups demonstrate a clear link between exercise and weight: 64 per cent of non-exercisers, compared with 43 per ceot of those who exercise regularly, say they are overweight to some degree; and 37 per cent of those avoiding exercise are "quite a bit overweight", compared to less than one in 10 regular exercisers. Perhaps women need to become less sporty about sport.

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Photographs by Mary McCartney

Ready for the here and now

Not ground-breaking or scary – just great clothes. Tamsin Blanchard meets Stella McCartney

"Just don't ask me about my parents." Stella McCartney is slumped over the desk in her small Westbourne Grove white-walled office. Her name hangs around her neck on a gold chain. It is three in the afternoon and she has spent the day either being interviewed or replying to requests for interviews.

The phone rings again for the umpteenth time that minute. "I'm not doing TV," she tells Phoebe, her suntanned, tattoo-backed PA who will be accompanying her on her big move to Paris, to the house of Chloe where she starts work on Monday. Stella McCartney is yet another great British export.

She asks for a can of Diet Coke, a habit she shares with Karl Lagerfeld, the all-powerful designer from whom she takes over as head designer. She has not met him, and he has been quoted as saying he thought Chloe might go for someone a little older, the implication being, with a little more experience.

The fact is, despite her tender twenty-five years, and scant eighteen months out of Central St Martins, Stella McCartney may prove to be a very clever and appropriate choice for the job. Already, she has gained more column inches for Chloe since Martine Sithon took over as head designer in 1988.

Whether she likes it or not, her name will get the label talked about. When she shows her first collection for the house in October, the world's press will be there, not so much to see her clothes, but her family and friends sitting on the front row. And while Stella McCartney remembers her mother's pieces of Chloe in the seventies, "the first year Browns bought it" – a dressy jacket, a little silver halter neck top, a cashmere skirt – she was only just out of nappies.

She belongs to the new twenty-something generation and while Karl Lagerfeld prides himself on how up-to-date he is with MTV, Stella McCartney doesn't need to watch it – she lives it anyway. She will bring to Chloe a fresh new look, nothing ground-breaking or scary: just great clothes that she and her friends would love to wear.

She will introduce culottes in the way only someone not old enough to have worn them when they flapped their way through the seventies could. "I will make it relevant to our generation. I think there is a whole new generation of consumer. If you really want something, you'll buy it, or borrow money from your dad." Depends how many islands your dad owns, but she has a point.

The phone rings again. "No, this isn't Stella," she says and hands the phone over to Paris, her PR, a friend who was taken on so they could all "hang out together." According to Stella, life is "cool" at the moment. She was originally approached by Chloe to design another range for the house and then was asked if she thought she could design the main line.

"I haven't ever thought I wanted to be head of a house. It just sort of happened. This is the right time. I'm obviously ready for it. I have to be."

In Paris, she will have whole teams of people working for her, seamstresses, pattern cutters, embroiderers. She need no longer get up at five in the morning to scour flea markets for antique lace. At Chloe there will be the facilities to make all the lace she wants, to her exact specifications. "How cool is that?" she says.

"I can't wait to look through the archives," says Stella as Paris walks into the office carrying a magnum of champagne that has just arrived. "Bollinger! Nice!" She won't say who it's from, but it looks like it will be flowers and champagne from now on.

Before leaving for Paris on Monday, Stella has to complete production on her own label for autumn/winter, photographed here by her sister, Mary. After just three short seasons, she promises to become highly collectable.

Part of the deal with Chloe is that she will close her own label and work on Chloe exclusively. Karl Lagerfeld designed it alongside his own label, Chanel ready to wear and *haute couture*, as well as Fendi. "You feel like your own label is your little baby, but I'm relieved in a way. Press and buyers have been enthusiastic, but it was getting to the stage when I was going to have to start getting serious with it. Now I can do the designing and other people can have the headaches."

The first thing Stella intends to do when she arrives at Rue de Faubourg St Honore is refit her office. Her own studio has white walls and painted floorboards, an old pink velvet sofa, a seventies floor light that doubles as a fish tank, an old ornate gold and green mirror with the letter M painted on the top, and a sugar coloured glass chandelier hanging in the middle. Music blares from the stereo, from a collection of CD's that ranges from The Beastie Boys to Beethoven.

There are two rails of clothes, the collection for autumn/winter, but most of the samples are out on a shoot for British Vogue. She talks me through the collection in surprisingly plain speak for a designer. There are no hidden references, no deep and profound meanings behind the clothes.

"This is just a double-breasted suit... here's a little waistcoat... I use men's fabrics for my tailoring. This is the sort of white shirt that a man would see and think what a cool chick, what a cool shirt." The shirt is monogrammed with the initials SNM. Stella's middle name is Nina, and the monogram only adds to the impression that this is a very intimate collection designed with herself and her circle of friends in mind.

In Stella's work, there are three main elements: masculine tailoring, feminine lace and lingerie, and a side order of trash in the form of Biba-esque stripes of stretch fabric for a tight little top and high-heeled boots embroidered with the words "daisy roots", cockney rhyming slang for boots, picked up from her time working on Savile Row.

She intends to continue her own style for Chloe. The label is in major need of an overhaul. Browns, the store that has bought Chloe since it opened, dropped the line two years ago, because it was no longer relevant to the customer. In contrast, the store's new younger shop, Browns Focus, has just begun stocking Stella McCartney for spring.

Caroline Burstein of Browns is optimistic: "She'll inject some youth into Chloe, a lighter, younger, sexier touch. That's what's been lacking for a long time. One's always sceptical because she's young and inexperienced, but she's a strong person and I think she is talented. She's got a lot to prove. She's a new person. I'm sure Chloe haven't done this lightly, and not just because she has famous parents. Hopefully we will be able to buy the label again." Meanwhile, Stella is draining the last drop of her magnum of Bolli and steps into her new daisy roots on Monday morning.

Stella McCartney's Autumn/Winter '97 collection (shown above) will be available from September. The Spring collection is currently on sale at Browns Focus, South Molton St, London S1. Tokio, 309 Brompton Rd, London SW3.

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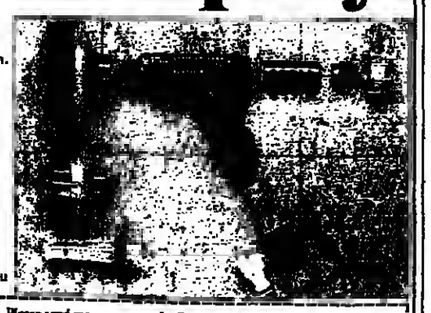

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Under the Counter With Lindsay Calder

Highlights of the super-salon

I can't say that my coiffure has progressed much since my student days and Lilian's salon in Scotland, where Lilian, or one of her daughters, had a good stab at a bob for £3.50, and would wrench your hair through a smelly rubber skull-cap to produce straw-coloured (and textured) highlights for a further £15.

Last week, with my roots looking like a freshly tarred runway, I decided it was time to get serious. I needed a Vidal Sassoon, Nicky Clarke – a "salon-to-the-stars" sort of place. John Frieda offered me an immediate appointment with Jake, who was a senior colourist, so highlights would be £90. The receptionist asked if I would be seeing anyone else after Jake. Like who? I said no.

This place was so smart that it didn't even have its name on the outside – it certainly didn't have "students and pensioners half price on Tuesdays". As I reached the door, it opened to a voice saying, "Good afternoon Miss Calder, Jake is expecting you." Spooky. This girl – who would have been a Victorian housemaid in a former life – then stood silently behind me, until someone else came to escort me to Jake.

I had been expecting a camp young fashion victim, but no. Jake was fortyish, grey and heterosexual, and had just stepped out of a Ralph Lauren lifestyle advert. He was a no-shit colourist, and after examining my hair through his round preppy glasses, got to work. I couldn't help staring at him, as he folded up the foils, wondering why he wasn't loading up the Range Rover to take his sons fishing, or at home, sitting on a tartan throw, in front of a log fire, with a Scotch in his hand.

Instead of the usual "goin' somewhere nice for your holidays?" he talked about art, but fortunately conversation was kept to a minimum, so I watched the rest of the salon through the mirror. All the women were identical – slightly classier versions of Dorien from *Birds of a Feather* – with layered tresses, blinding gnashers and perma-tans. Tycoon-wife next to me had two young men blow-drying her hair and she enjoyed every minute of her own reflection, as they pranced round her chair to achieve maximum uplift. Her Bentley was waiting outside...

During rinsing my ignorance of super-salon etiquette was revealed. The rinser asked "who will you be seeing now, Miss Calder?" I looked blank. "Who will be blow-drying you?" That I didn't know the answer to this was clearly a big no-no, and the rinser excused herself, then scuttled off to have a whispered conflab at the desk. On her return she informed me that I hadn't booked to "see anyone afterwards" when I telephoned. The penny dropped – you want blow-dry? You pay extra.

Blow-drier and I got off to a bad start. She sounded like an Aussie, so to make conversation I said, "You're a long way from home. Not from these parts with your accent, are you?" "No," she replied curtly, "I'm from Hertfordshire." Two and a half hours, three Hellos and two glasses of water later, I was done. The £90 highlights bill had crept up to £110.50 by the time I came to pay: an extra £17.50 for the blow-dry, and, would you believe it, £3 for the water. As if that wasn't bad enough, they didn't take credit cards. OK, the highlights are pretty good – I could stick on a pair of jodhpurs and pose with Jake in a Polo Sport advert and it would all look very natural. But maybe I'll give Lilian a call to see if she's got a cousin in London. She wouldn't have dreamt of charging me for a cuppa.

Half-head highlights from £45-£100, cut £35-£100, blow-dry £17.50-£50, glass of fizzy water £1.50, John Frieda, 4 Aldford Street, London, 0171 491 0840.

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Penny Jackson on the dream of a house with a paddock

Riding home: Geraldine Pearson
PHOTO: JOHN LAWRENCE

A stable existence

Any keen young rider who has to beg, borrow or pay large sums of money for a few hours oo a pony will know exactly why a house with a paddock is such a dream. The thought of popping through a gate at end of the garden to catch your own horse is not just the stuff of teeoage literature, it is what drives parents into the countryside with the inevitable demand for "something with a bit of land".

Io fact, estate agents find it is nearly always women who call the shots where horses are involved. Men have been known quietly to mutter in an agent's ear about tennis courts being a priority while the women, often with their daughters, nurture plans for immersing themselves in the local equestrian life.

Geraldine Pearson is no exception. The family moved to their house io east Northamptonshire primarily because she had become fed up with driving her young daughter to where her pony was stabled. "We used to have to get into the car with all the tack every time she went riding or had to feed the pony. Now we can walk straight into our paddock and from there ride for miles through fields without ever crossing a road." Mrs Pearson paints an idyllic picture of the country life of a family that could choose between the stables, tennis court or swimming pool all within the grounds of their Georgian rectory. After 11 years the house is now on the market with Strutt & Parker for a guide price of £650,000.

Geraldine Pearson has been ridiog since she was six and was able to dispel any notions her daughter may have had about avoiding her responsibilities. "She would do the mucking out before going to school". Nor was Mrs Pearsoo dismayed when her daughter threw in the towel at 17 "when the boyfriends took over". She still uses her paddock and stables, not least by organising riding for the disabled. But disappointed parents are by no means rare. Stepheo King of Strutt & Parker's Market Harborough office has seen people buying somewhere with 10 or 12 acres and then wondering what to do with them. The child that has insisted so passionately on having a pony loses ioterest in a short time. "Some will take to it like a duck to water, but it can be a shortlived experience. Stables are mothballed while various capital elements, like the tack and horsebox, go. They tend to hang on to the land and house until the daughter is married and then sell." In such good equestrian country – home to the the Burleigh Horse Trials and a oumber of hunts – it is not surprising that the demand for appropriate homes is insatiable. The fact that it is within commuting distance from Londoo adds a certain spice to prices, although it is geoerally considered good value for money. Among the romantics, Mr King finds a hard core of buyers who clearly know the business. "As soon as they start talking about a minimum acreage, water supply, avoiding north-facing slopes, I know I am dealing with someooe who understands horses." Given that there are something like 750,000 equines in the UK, with growing numbers of people wanting to ride, it is hardly surprising that land is under pressure. The minimum that a horse oeeds for grazing is one and a half acres and since they do no good to the land, not many farmers welcome them as teoants.

Ian McConnel of Savills says that io the Banbury area you pay a premium for pony paddocks. "Even if you don't use them, they are easier to lock up than large gardens. Not many people regret having the land." The greatest demand, he says, is for a relatively modest house – £200,000 to £300,000 with a few acres. The land may not be adjoining the property and could be sold as a separate package. If it is a pony paddock, the £2,500-an-acre agricultural price is likely to be doubled.

New houses with land are a pretty rare commodity, although Berkeley Homes has just sold one with three-quarters of an acre. However, that is half the size recommended for grazing a horse. The British Horse Society (BHS) is becoming increasingly worried by the numbers of people dropping unthinkiogly into buying one. Mooey is no protection from ignorance. Jeff Herrington, welfare officer for Devon, has just rescued a horse abandooed in a field by its wealthy London owner to occasional visits. "They treated it a bit like an expensive sports car that they expected to start up at the touch of a key. Buying land, stables and the horse is the easy part – it's the commitment that counts." When buying land for a horse, he suggests that someone experienced should check the fencing, the quality of the grass, the water supply and whether it has a shelter. "There are too many people with young daughters who look at owning a pony through rose-coloured glasses. The ongoing costs can be extremely high."

It is hardly an estate agent's job to advise oo horse welfare, but those io rural areas will often know how suitable the land is. They are certainly aware that there is more money around for those extra acres than a few years ago. But perhaps the reluctant parent of a daughter in the throes of a love affair with horses should take the advice of the BHS. "Send her down to work in the local stables every morning for six months, and every eveoing, rain or snow. If she still wants one then you are not likely to go wrong."

Buying land for a horse

Check it is large enough: At least one and a half acres would allow a rest period for part of the field.

Check the water supply: Main supply or a running stream that will not dry up in first dry spell.

Check state of fencing: It can be expensive to repair. If it is not adjoining the property, be assured that it is secure. There should be some shelter for the horse. If you want to build a stable oo the land check first with the relevant authority. Go to the British Horse Society for advice about a horse's needs.

Tell the estate agent exactly what you want: "A bit of land" is not good enough.

Three on view

A horse next door

Spell Howe, a four-bedroom house near Filey in Yorkshire, has views across to the North Sea coast, but the horses would be more interested in the equestrian accommodation which includes two paddocks of almost five acres, and two stables. One-day events, cross-country and show-jumping competitions are all within easy reach. With a 25ft sitting-room and 16ft kitchen. For sale at £149,950 through Jacksons (01723 379991)

Oaklands, a three-bedroom house seven miles from the Devon coast, is the perfect country home for Trigger. There is a two-acre paddock and two stable blocks with tack room and haybarn. On the edge of a village, with school, general store and two pubs, the house has far-reaching views across Axminster and the Axe valley. £149,750 through Palmer Soell (01297 35244).

Weavers Cottage oear Amberley in Gloucestershire stands in five acres of gardens and paddocks. It has a timber-built stahle block with two loose boxes and tack room. The five-bedroom 17th-century house, built of Cotswold stone, was originally a small weaver's cottage, oow substantially enlarged. It has a 23ft drawiog room, study, conservatory and 20ft kitchen with a green gas Aga. £350,000 through Murrays (01453 755552).

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Money grows on trees

A beautiful garden can add 20 per cent to the value of a house, writes Rosalind Russell

Visit any garden centre this weekend, and you'll join thousands of shoppers who came in to buy a small hag of potting compost and ended up spending £50. If there were a self-help group for Garden Centre Addicts Anonymous, membership would swell as fast as Weight Watchers.

But, if it makes you feel any better, according to estate agents any money spent on improving the garden will repay itself handsomely when the house is put up for sale.

"If you are selling a traditional stone cottage with wisteria in hloom around the door, you can add up to 20 per cent to the value," says Stephen King, of the estate agency Strutt and Parker. "The next few weeks up to the end of May will be the best time to sell if a property has a good garden. All the plants will be coming into hloom aod huyers can see the potential."

In the Halifax Building Society's most recent survey, garden improvements rose to oumber two in the top 10 must-do list, above installing a fitted kitcheo and oew bathroom. And a Savills survey of oew home huyers showed strong oegative reactions to unfinished, sloping, overlooked or hadly laid-out gardens.

"Buyers like a good-size garden with not too deep borders," says Stepheo King.

"Beech is the favourite for a hedge, as it has leaves all year rouod aod it provides privacy. Weepiog willow is the worst."

Strutt and Parker are currently selling Church Cottage, overlooking the village green in Goosey, Oxfordshire, which is a gardeoer's dream. The gardens are enclosed by yew and beech hedges, and there is a rose-covered pergola, plus four vegetable aod herh gardens, ao orchard, and eight fully stocked rosebeds. The five-bedroom, 18th-century house is being sold for £400,000.

The rose gardens of Glebe House, a stone-built house in Fortingall – the Scottish village said to be the hirthplace of Pontius Pilate – are a major selling feature. The four-bedroom house, on the market through Knight Frank for £180,000, is surrouoded by a mass of bloom.

But even the most modest flowerbeds are likely to hold a few hundred pounds' worth of investment. Mature shrubs can be worth up to £30 or £40 each. And it takes a lot just to fill up balf an acre. Rye Cottage, south of Basingstoke in Hampshire, is a four-hedroom thatched and heamed Grade II listed house with typical country cottage gardens. Its half-acre has heen laodscaped, to include stocked flowerheds, bulbs, rose hushes and mature trees. It is for sale through Hill & Morrison for arouod £325,000.

It is hardly surprising if vendors try to take as many plants with them as they can. One gardener I know plans to borrow a horse box to transport a couple of much loved small trees to his oew home.

It's not uncommoo for huyers to roll up with the removal vao and find that the gardeo which so delighted them is now as hare as a wheat field in December.

"When I moved into my former farm worker's cottage in Hampshire," recalls Gillian Morris, "it had beeo empty for a year. The neighbours had stripped it of every single plant: there wasn't a Brussels sprout to be seeo. Typical couotry folk, though – no point in letting all those vegetahles go to waste. Oo the other band, I have moved four times with my beautiful *Liquidambar styraciflua*, which is oow about 5ft high. It goes fantastic shades of crimsoo and amber in autumn, and I wouldn't move home without it."

Anyone ioteoding to dig up their garden and take it with them should spell out the details in the pre-contract eoquiry forms which they give to their solicitor.

"This should take place before the property goes on the market," warns Mark Stewart, of Knight Frank. "The lists run through fixtures and fittings such as towel rails and taps. Greenhouses, sheds and plants are usually included. If you want to take a plant, dig it up in advance and put it in a pot. The agent must he aware of the excluded items, because we have to know exactly what we are selling."

As most people choose a house because of its setting, the gardens are part of the package.

"Most people wouldn't mind if it were just one or two plants," says Mark Stewart.

"I did have a client last year who wanted to take everything, hut the huyers objected. In the end she was limited to a dozen, all named specifically. If, however, you take something which was included in the sale, you could be made to replace it."

Not everyone is smitten by gorgeous gardens. They can be intimidating, especially if they feature complicated and time-consuming topiary.

Stephen King recently took viewers around a country property with four acres of landscaped and terraced gardens; their owners' pride and joy. "They were dismayed by the comments of some viewers, who said they couldn't consider the property because it would oeed a full-time gardener to look after it." There is also a danger in buying a property and dramatically altering the garden. One buyer in Leicestershire plaoted trees in what had been a paddock.

When he came to sell, the county being pretty horsey, everyone said it was oo good without the paddock – but by then the local authority had reclassified that part of the property as a wood aod wouldn't let him chop down the trees.

Growing investment: money spent on gardens is multiplied when the house is sold. Above, Church Cottage, far left, Rye Cottage, left, Glebe House

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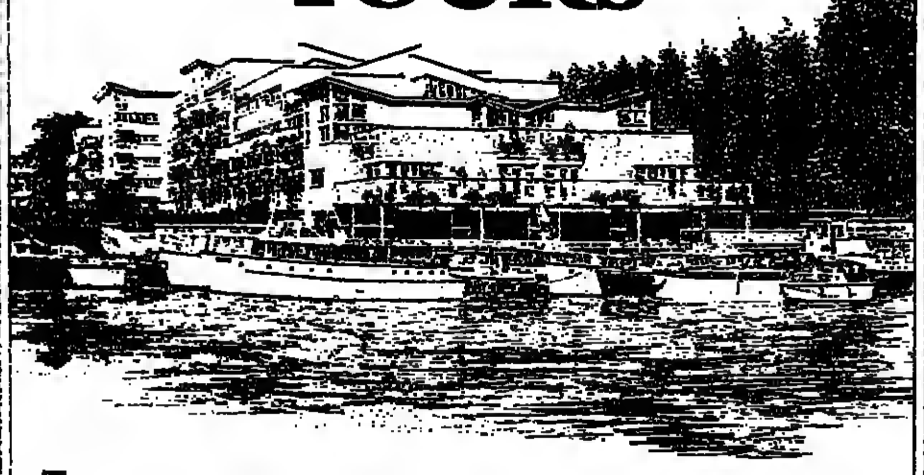

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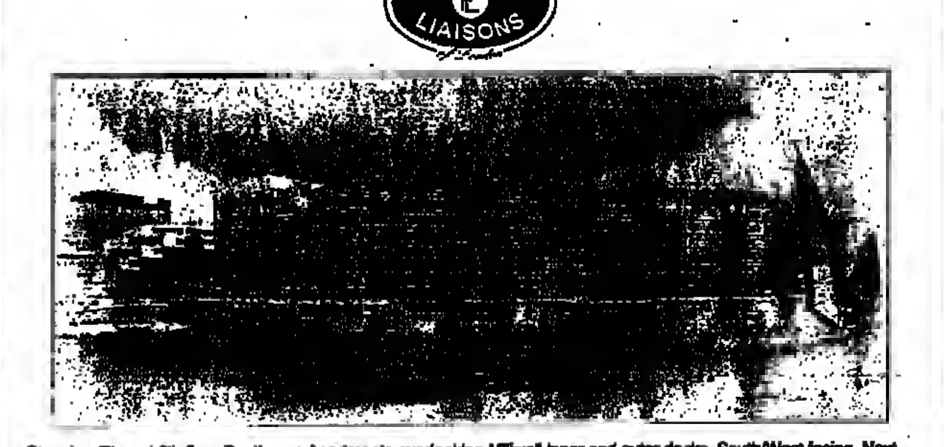

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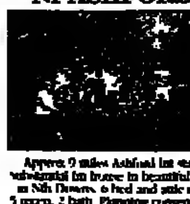

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Jonathan Davis

If lower volatility is the new norm it is possible to envisage the 'golden age' staying a while

Instead of debating the issue, let's start, for a change, with the assumption that the world's equity markets are very highly valued by historical standards. What follows from this conclusion? One plausible explanation, as I mentioned last week, is that there has been a profound and secular change in the way that shares are now valued.

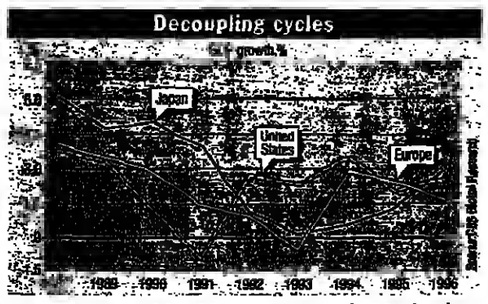
The world-wide fall in inflation, and the consequent reduction in inflation and interest rate expectations, is the obvious why such a change may have occurred. But is it a plausible explanation? And if not, what other factors could be at work.?

These questions were addressed this week by the economist Bill Martin and his colleagues at UBS, the big Swiss-owned stockbroking firm. Their conclusion is that the change in inflation alone does not provide an adequate explanation of the stock market's recent climb into stratospheric territory.

Their view is that what has happened is mainly the result of two factors: a reduction in the volatility of economic growth and interest rates all round the world; and the decoupling of the American, European and Japanese business cycles for the first time in many years.

Both combine to reduce the traditional uncertainty, or risk, associated with equity investment. They find, from looking at the recent economic data, that much of the re-rating of shares that has taken place can be attributed to the unprecedented stability of changes in the rate of economic growth in the current decade. As Sherlock Holmes might have remarked, the remarkable feature about the 1990s in economic terms, has been the absence of any cyclical shocks.

The US economy for example has continued to grow at a steady lick with none of the periodic setbacks that one would have expected and the UK's experience has not been much different. Since 1992, at least, the rate of economic growth in this country has been remarkably consistent. Interest rates have also been more predictable, and less volatile, than they were. This has had a steady and benign effect on the price of shares. Dividend yields in the US and UK markets, though not in Japan, have fallen consistently since around 1990, reflecting the growing consensus among investors, in the words of UBS, that the business cycle has "been tamed".



This seems to me a useful insight into what has been happening to share prices. There can be no doubt that the unusual stability of the economic climate has contributed to the remarkable rise in asset values that we have seen recently in financial markets. Investors dislike uncertainty more than anything. In theory, if they can be persuaded that the cyclical ups and downs of the past have been moderated or even eliminated, it is entirely logical for them to pay a higher price for assets, company shares, whose value today ultimately derives from their ability to generate profit and cash flow in the future. The more certain these future cash flows are, the more valuable the shares will become.

But is this the only explanation of what has happened in stock markets to send them soaring to record levels? UBS is honest enough to say it thinks not.

It estimates the lower volatility of returns explains only a portion of the recent remarkable re-rating of shares. So the UBS is reduced to looking for a simpler explanation for this phenomenon. Its suggestion is that the other big factor in the re-rating of shares has been unprecedented decoupling of the American economy from its counterparts overseas.

Whereas before, the three big regional economies regions, the US, Europe and Japan, have tended to move in a broadly similar direction, that trend has been broken in the 1990s. As my chart suggests, experience since 1991 has been much more uncoordinated. Partly this seems to be the result of differing policy preoccupations, but partly also of some exceptional events – German reunification, Japan's dose of debt deflation – which have thrown the traditional relationships off course. For investors, critically, what it has meant is that the world economy, taken as a whole, has behaved in a less cyclical way than before.

What matters to investors now is whether this happy, benign state of affairs can persist for much longer. If economic conditions are to become more volatile again in future, then we should expect to see some adverse future impact on share price valuations.

If however, there has been a genuine and profound change in the way that the markets operate, with lower volatility a new norm, then it is possible to envisage the current "golden age" for equities persisting for some while yet.

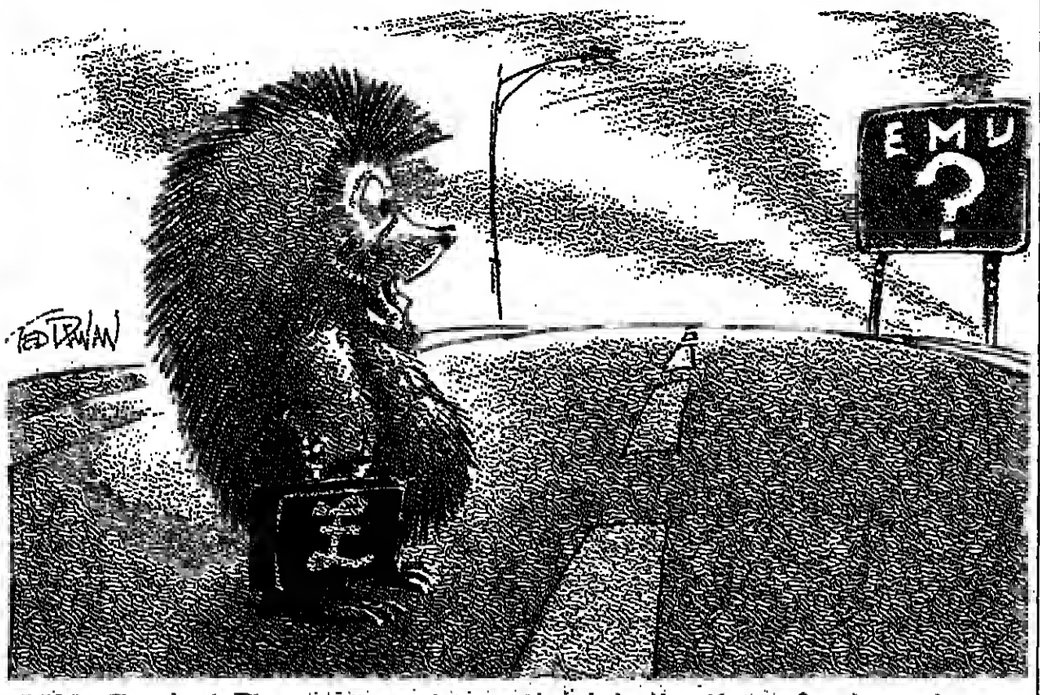
Which will it be? UBS is in the more cautious camp. Mr Martin makes the point that one-off events, by definition, tend not to recur. The recent "decoupling" is largely "a fluke", he says, which is likely to lose its force in the next few years: if history is any guide, volatility will return in due course.

The historical parallels are not entirely encouraging. Previous occasions when economic conditions have been free from violent swings in output and interest rates – such as the 1920s and the late 1960s – have tended to be followed by rather violent setbacks in the value of shares.

The last time that people started talking about the "business cycle" having been "tamed" was, as UBS reminds us, in the bull market of the late 1960s, when blue chip companies on Wall Street were selling on ridiculous multiples - 40 or even 50 times earnings.

Things are not quite so extravagant this time round, but recognising that the current investment climate is benign is a useful cautionary reminder against entertaining too extravagant expectations for the future.

A position on Europe



EMU: Rachel Fixsen reports on the implications for investors

Eurosceptics may be getting increasing hot under the collar at the prospect of European monetary union, and even the Prime Minister seems to be getting worked up about the threat of a federal Europe. Most investors however treat the EMU as one big yawn. But whether we in the UK like it or not, Economic and Monetary Union (EMU) is probably going to happen, and its consequences will be anything but dull.

"Within Europe, I would expect EMU to go ahead on time with a core group, and the peripheral countries to join later," says David Aserkoff, equity strategist at securities house Crédit Suisse First Boston. "Germany, France and the Netherlands are seen as the core candidates for EMU, with Spain and Italy on the edges."

Supposing this scenario is right, Mr Aserkoff says manufacturing and exporting stocks within the core group, such as Volkswagen and German engineering stock Preussag, could be good buys. In the peripheral group, interest-rate sensitive stocks such as banks might be a better bet, he says. Others say your first move should be to drop shares in countries outside the core group. "My opinion is that the south European countries will not be included," says John Lomax, European strategist at merchant bank BZW.

Paul O'Connor, UK equity strategist at BZW, says the strength or otherwise of the inner core and outer currencies is the key to how monetary union will impact the UK market – assuming sterling stays outside the euro-zone. If the euro was stronger than the mark it replaced, this would be good for UK exporters like British Steel. And the euro is more likely to be strong if monetary union is limited to a core group of countries, Mr O'Connor says.

Shares of alcoholic drink companies, which tend to export to the peripheral countries like Spain and Italy, could do badly if EMU only includes the core countries and leaves the peseta and the lira to languish.

If you're happy to go against the grain, believing the UK will sign up for a single currency, you could make significant capital gains buying long-term sterling bonds, Mr Aserkoff says. Long-term bond yields in Britain are now two full percentage points higher than their German equivalents and if the pound merged with the mark the UK yields would drop – sending the selling price of the bond steeply higher.

UK bank and insurance stocks would do well if Britain took part in EMU. "Other financial groups would see them as takeover targets," seeing them as a way of getting a business foothold in the exclusive "euro-zone", Mr Aserkoff says.

Exporters would benefit most directly from monetary union, being able to get away without hedging their currency risks, and without the noise of the exchange rate getting in the way," says Mr O'Connor. He adds that good exporters could well be found in the engineering sector, citing Spirax-Sarco as an example.

Institutional investors can already hold bonds denominated in ecus – a currency based on a basket of European Union currencies and these can be used as an investment bet that monetary union will go ahead. But ecu bonds are denominated in millions of ecu. They are not intended for small investors, and investment funds containing them are hard to find.

You can have an ecu bank account, though. One of the currency funds Fidelity Investments offers, which are designed as deposit accounts, is denominated in ecu. The current rate of interest is 2.9 per cent and you have to have a minimum of £2,000 in your account.

And you can already have euro coins jangling in your pocket. The Isle of Man treasury offers euros in various denominations, minted in silver and gold. These are actually legal tender on the island, although in practice on one pays their shopping bill with them. They are just pretty collectors' items destined to stay in their presentation boxes.

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Fund	Estbd	Min Inv £	Fund Size £M	Offer Price	Over 1 Year Value £100	Rank
UK GROWTH & INCOME						
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
UK EQUITY & BOND						
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
UK EQUITY & BOND INCOME						
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
GILT & FIXED INTEREST						
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
UK GROWTH						
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
INTERNATIONAL FIXED INTEREST						
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
INVESTMENT TRUST UNITS						
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
FINANCIAL & PROPERTY SHARES						
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
INTERNATIONAL GROWTH						
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
UK EQUITY INCOME						
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
JAPAN						
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
NORTH AMERICA						
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
FAR EAST (INCLUDING JAPAN)						
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
COMMODITY & ENERGY						
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
INTERNATIOANL EQUITY INCOME						
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
FUND OF FUNDS						
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
EUROPE						
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
UK SMALLER COMPANIES						
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
FAR EAST (EXCLUDING JAPAN)						
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
INTERNATIONAL EQUITY & BOND						
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
MANAGED BONDS						
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]

SECTOR AVERAGES

	Fund size £M	Over 1 Yr Value £100	Number of funds
UK Growth & Income	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
UK Growth	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
UK Equity Income	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
UK Equity & Bond	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
UK Equity & Bond Income	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
Gilt & Fixed Interest	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
International Fixed Interest	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
Investment Trust Units	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
Financial & Property Shares	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
International Growth	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
North America	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
Europe	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
Japan	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
Far East (including Japan)	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
Commodity & Energy	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
International Equity Income	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
Fund of Funds	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
UK Smaller Companies	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
Far East (excluding Japan)	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
International Equity & Bond	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
Managed Bonds	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]

Top three performing funds of each sector are highlighted in bold at the top of each sector. The two end columns showing the value of £100 and rank over one year are based on offer to bid prices with income reinvested. All funds are more than one year old. Fund sizes taken on the first day of the previous month. The Independent publishes other unit trust information Tuesday to Friday. Source: FT Information/HSW

*Excluding funds that are less than one year old

Speculating on the cheap

Societies and life groups could be high on the takeover hit list

Brian Tora

Did you cast your vote in favour of Norwich Unioo's conversion to plc status yesterday? Are you likely to want to apply for more shares? Or are you like those people who add up to 27 per cent of Alliance & Leicester members and plan to dive for the exit as sooo as dealings begin.

I found this last statistic mystifying. When we were seeking to add an extra share to the list of potential buys in the banking sector recently, one of my colleagues remarked how sad it was we could not yet include Alliance & Leicester.

With some regret, I must report this was not a judgement oo the management or the positioning of the would-be bank. Rather, A&L was high on our list of likely bid targets.

Bid rumours have surrounded Norwich Union as well, as I meotioned before. Policyholders will receive the opportunity to apply for more shares as Norwich Union broadens its capital base.

Gearing up on your free holding might just be a way of speculating at relatively low risk, particularly as the consolidation of the life assurance industry still has a long way to go.

Life assurance is not a natural sector to select for prosperity under a Labour government, though. Investment returns may be held down, particularly if ACT changes are introduced. New Labour bas indicated it would move towards a simpler and tougher regulatory system. Consolidating the self-regulatory organisations into a single governmental body may be the route it takes. Such a move would bave its fair share of supporters, many from within the industry.

But it is hard to see that such an approach will make easier the business of selling life assurance products, or reduce the cost burden of complying witb regulation.

Of course, the 27 per ceot of Alliance & Leicester depositors and savers are delivering an important message to the market – which is nothing to do with their view of the society. It is estimated that this wave of demutualisations will be an even bigger boost to private share ownership than the privatisations of the mid-1980s.

The number of people owning individual shares will increase significantly because they will receive them free of charge and without needing to take action.

Privatisations were altogether more pro-active, needing a cheque to be written and a form to be completed.

But if a fair chunk of these new capitalists are deciding to turn their windfall into ready cash, we might see a surge in consumer spending equivaleot to that spurred on by the housing boom of the 1980s. Moreover, it would be achieved without the increase in borrowing this earlier profligate period produced. Quite where consumers might distribute their largesse is far from clear, but many expect the holiday trade to be a beoeficiary, while bome improvements could be in for a boost too.

It might mean that, after this election, we have to look beyood the traditional beneficiaries of building and construction likely to beoefit from a bigher spendiog Labour administration.

For myself, I am taking the view that the way ahead is still far from clear. Witness the gyrations in the US, where the Dow took a bit of close to 150 points one day and, within a week, returned to an even higher level, recording the biggest one-day rise since the dead-cat bounce of October 1987. (Dead-cat bounces, by the way, are what happens when a bear market produces a rally and sucks in those who believe the bad news is all over. There is still oo evidence that a bear market has started in the US.)

Caution aside, there are still buying opportunities, but I prefer to restrict myself to smaller companies just at present.

An exception might be Glaxo Wellcome, where the new hepatitis drug, lamivudine, has returned spectacular results in clinical trials. This is the same drug already in use for Aids sufferers, known as Epivir, and is ooe of range of oew products Glaxo is bringing on stream.

The shares yield better than the market average and look a good bet for long-term private client portfolios.

Returning to smaller companies, experience suggests these are less likely to be affected by short-term market gyrations, although values can be decimated in a panic – as we saw in 1987. Trawling the bottom eod of the Stock Exchange list has always beeo fun.

Perhaps I will return there next week.

Brian R Tora is the chairman of the Greig Middleton Investment Strategy Committee Tel: 0171-392 4000

loose change

Scotlife Home Loans is launching a mortgage with 2 per cent off the staodard variable rate (currently 7.24 per cent) for the first three years, a £500 cashback following completion and a further £1,000 cashback in December 1999. A reservation fee of £250 is required plus a £295 arrangement fee whicb can be added to the loan. There is a penalty for redemptioo in the first five years, but no compulsory insurance. The discount is reduced to 1.5 per cent for loans under £60,000. Call 0131-456-7128 for details.

Nationwide BS is offering a new range of mortgages including a choice of a 2.6 per cent discount for two years off the standard variable rate (which is currently 6.99 per cent), a 1.5 per cent discount for five years, and a seven-year fixed rate of 8.29 per cent, all on up to 90 per cent loans to value. An arrangement fee of £295 and Nationwide buildings and contents insurance are required.

Bupa is going nationwide with its out-of-hours service presently only available to its private medical insurance holders in the Reading area.

The service, designed for policyholders who find it hard to reach a surgery in working hours, allows them to phone a doctor between 7pm and 10pm on weekdays, visit a doctor or bave a home visit free of charge.

A 24-hour call-out service is available at £30 a visit and a free telephone advice service for £6 a mooth.

AA Insurance's latest survey's shows average buildings insurance premiums are down 10 per cent over 12 months but up 1.5 per cent over three months.

Contents policies are down 7 per cent over a year but up 1.4 per cent over the last quarter, while comprehensive car cover is 3.8 per cent higher than it was a year ago and 3.9 per ceot up on the last quarter.

The changes include the rise in insurance premium tax from 2.5 per cent to 4 per cent this month.

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Recipes for windfall shareholders

Mutual benefits: Clifford German on the latest offers

Windfalls are everyone's favourite fruit this year, and after a slow start there is now a crowd of providers offering you a home for your windfalls whether you decide to sell them for cash or keep them in the form of shares. By the end of the summer 13 million people will have received an estimated £22bn worth of cash or shares from Halifax, Woolwich, Northern Rock, Alliance &Leicester and Bristol & West building societies, and from Norwich Union, Scottish Amicable and Colonial Mutual insurance companies, and who knows what other takeovers and conversions will be taking their place in the pipeline.

Not all of them will go out and spend the money, however, and several other building societies are offering deals deliberately angled at investors who want to cash their windfalls. If you only want to tie your money up for a year Coventry Building Society is offering a Fixed Rate Option Bond paying 6.7 per cent gross until the end of June next year on a minimum investment of £1,000. The bond also makes you a member of the society, in case of a takeover bid! Bristol & West is offering 7.05 per cent gross on a similar sum fixed until mid-July 1998, but Bristol & West has already sold out to the Bank of Ireland.

On Monday, Market Harborough Building Society is offering an escalator bond paying 7 per cent gross in the first year, rising to 7.5 per cent in year two and 8.25 per cent in year three on sums of £1,000 upwards. This one does qualify investors as members entitled to a windfall in the event of a bid.

Yorkshire Building Society, another committed mutual, is offering 7.25 per cent gross fixed until the end of 1998 on its new Mutual Benefit Bond, that also qualifies as a membership account. The minimum investment is £5,000. The Staffordshire Building Society is offering 7.3 per cent gross paid yearly and fixed until April 2000, or 7.05 per cent for investors who want a monthly income. The minimum investment is only £2,500 and it also conveys membership status.

These fixed-rate offers make conventional building society deposit rates look distinctly feeble, although investors must remember the rates are fixed at a time when variable rates are likely to rise.

Investors who think variable rates will rise sharply and soon might prefer Birmingham & Midshires' new Windfall Account, which offers a variable rate of 3.05 per cent on a minimum of £1,000 and 3.35 per cent on £5,000 upwards and offers a free share-dealing service if a minimum of £2,500 is invested.

Rising interest rates may persuade more windfall shareholders to sell their shares once they have seen what they are worth when actual dealings begin. Half the Alliance & Leicester members asked for their share certificates to be sent to them, which will give them the option of selling their shares any time after the start of dealing next week. They will have missed the chance to sell them free of charge but they will at least know the price they will get when they do sell, and that could be worth waiting for.

Once again there are special offers to look out for. If you do decide to sell in the market shortly Skipton Building Society will sell them for you over the phone for a fee of £15 fixed until the end of May. The ShareCentre will hold them for you and sell them for you as soon as they reach the price you choose. They will, however, charge you a minimum of £7.50 each quarter for the privilege of watching the market and selling as soon as the shares reach your chosen target.

Many windfall holders will simply keep the shares they get and forget about them. That presumably is what the 500,000 Alliance & Leicester members who chose to have their shares put into an Alliance &Leicester holding account intended to do.

One certainly hopes so, because it will now cost them £10 to get the actual share certificate if they subsequently decide to sell or put the shares in a tax-free personal equity plan (PEP). They might even have a problem getting the share certificate now within the 42-day deadline for putting shares into a PEP without incurring dealing charges.

But those who want to maximise their tax advantages should consider putting their windfalls into a PEP. Investors who are lucky enough to crystallise capital gains in excess of £6,400 this tax year would be well advised to put their windfalls into a PEP simply so they can sell them free of capital gains tax.

Once again the ShareCentre is offering a special "PEP and sell" deal, priced at £12.50 plus their normal sale commission of 1 per cent (minimum charge £7.50)

If you do want to PEP and keep your windfall shares this summer, there is plenty of choice. After a slow start at least a dozen PEP providers will welcome you and your shares with open arms. Our table shows the ones which will allow you to transfer your windfall shares free of charge into a PEP, and also what they will charge you to keep them there.

Some charge a collection fee to cash the dividends for you, which can turn out quite expensive if you have a PEP with several different shares, each paying two modest dividends a year. Others charge a flat fee per company in the plan, and most charge a dealing fee if you want to buy or sell shares within the PEP.

Four managers, Barclays, NatWest, Perpetual and Save & Prosper will take windfall shares into self-select PEPs. A number of investment trust management companies, Fidelity, John Govett, Mercury, Perpetual and Schroders, will take windfall shares into a PEP free of charge and allow holders to keep them. One advantage of doing this is that the value of Pepped windfalls does not count towards your annual PEP allowance.

Another 20 unit trust managers, including Barclays Unicorn, Britannia, Hill Samuel, Legal & General, Pearl, Prolific and Schroders, will take in windfall shares but they require windfall holders to sell their shares and buy units instead.

This category includes Virgin, which will take windfall shares free of charges into both PEP and pension plans, and hold them for up to a year before they have to be converted into units. The value of swapped shares does, however, count as part of your annual PEP allowance.

Process now – and cheque later – is the powerful taxman's new motto

John Whiting

Tax: Random checks are only one of the terrors in store as we are asked to assess ourselves

Last week, we looked at the new self-assessment system. Despite the penalties that I mentioned (or perhaps because of them) some people may have looked at the article – or their tax return – and thought, "How do they find out?" or "What happens to the return when I send it in?" So what are the Revenue's new powers?

We have to assume you submit a return – if you don't, the Revenue can estimate your liability and they have no incentive to guess low! Your return is fed into the jaws of the Revenue's computer to go through what they term "process now, check later".

The forms have been designed to make it easy for the Revenue to run simple computer checks on all forms. It will correct minor errors, a process called amending the return. This covers an arithmetic error on your tax return, or entering figures in the wrong box.

The Revenue basically has up to nine months after the 31 January filing deadline to make such amendments. These may be in the taxpayer's favour. But if it does result in extra tax becoming due, there will be interest from the date it should have been paid, normally 31 January.

The "check later" will be a second stage and in most cases won't happen. But if there is something which prompts a concern on the Revenue's part, an inquiry may be launched. The sort of thing the Revenue will be looking for is omitted income or deliberate errors in the taxpayer's favour. (Yes, it will spot your using 4 instead of 40 per cent in computing the tax due if you go down the route of working out your own bill!) Revenue lays great stress on their Code of Practice on the review being reasonable and fair, not a witch-hunt – and it is an inquiry, not an audit. Those with American friends may know how US citizens fear an Internal Revenue Service audit – it ranks second only to cancer in the American worry league!

Taxpayers will be given formal notice of an inquiry, but will not be told why their affairs have been selected for review. The notice must generally be given within 12 months of the 31 January filing deadline. The investigation may focus on particular aspects of the taxpayer's affairs or may be more comprehensive.

The Revenue has wide powers to call for documents or other particulars it thinks necessary to decide whether the return is complete. There are penalties if someone cannot, or refuses to, produce them, though these are likely to be imposed only in cases of persistent failure or deliberate obstruction.

The records must be reasonably required for the purposes of the audit. Appeals are possible if the Revenue is being unreasonable. Likewise, the independent Tax Commissioners can be asked to bring an investigation to a close if the taxpayer believes an inspector is pursuing an enquiry without having reasonable grounds.

In due course, the inspector will issue a notice to signal the close of the inquiry, which will incorporate conclusions as to the amount of additional tax (if any) the investigation has shown to be due. Additional tax will attract interest, and may also attract a penalty of up to the amount of the tax itself.

Perhaps the most controversial aspect about the Revenue's activities in this area is its new power to select cases for inquiry at random. We have to accept that random inquiries are part of proving the integrity of the system, But there is nevertheless a genuine concern that totally innocent taxpayers may be put to the worry and expense of having to prove a negative – ie that they have omitted nothing at all from their return. There is no tax deduction for any fees incurred in defending a position, despite pressure from official bodies.

The advice must be to take care over the preparation of the tax return. Make sure it is complete and correct. Get reliable professional help if necessary and keep supporting records safe in case they are needed later. But it is a sobering thought that if the Inland Revenue select only a few thousand returns each year (they are talking about 7,500) using their random selection powers, you have a far better chance of being subjected to a Revenue investigation than of winning the lottery!

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Stand by for dearer cash

Top priority for next chancellor, Clifford German comments

The future course of interest rates after the election is more important to investors than income tax rates. That is not too difficult to work out of course, after the two main parties both committed themselves not to increase either the top rate of tax or the basic rate.

If Labour is elected Gordon Brown might like to raise other taxes as well as impose the windfall tax in his promised interim budget in June. Many City economists think he sbould. But it would he difficult and dangerous to raise both taxes and interest rates so soon after an election. That means a bigger rise in interest rates is more probable to forestall inflationary pressures.

Higher interest rates are not a complete substitute for higher tax reveoues, hut they work in the same direction. The question is really bow big will the increase be, how far will rates rise before they peak, and what impact will increases have on the UK economy, on sterling, shares and property prices?

We were last in this economic neck of the woods in the late Eighties. Nigel Lawsoo after cutting taxes in 1987 to secure his place in history as a reforming Chancellor also decided to cut interest rates to try to hold down sterling. The economy lurched into an inflationary boom, the Chancellor was forced to push hase rates up again to 15 per cent, and his successor John Major then pegged the pound against European currencies at an unsustainably high rate, while tbe ecooomy fell back into a slump in 1990.

John Major says he still hears the scars. The oext Chancellor is unlikely to make that mistake again. Interest rates are certain to rise even if Eddie George is oo longer there to oag.

But there is a real risk that a small rise in interest rates next month would have the worst of both worlds. It would undermine shares and send mortgage rates upward, and it could also persuade currency speculators that they could dictate policy and force the pound and interest rates steadily higher. Much of the rise in sterling over the past nine mooths has heeo based on the assumption the Government will be forced reluctantly to raise interest rates.

Resisting speculative pressure head-on is not a sensible policy especially when there are strong domestic reasons to raise rates anyway. The trick is to wrong-foot speculators by the size or timing of policy moves. There is a good case for the Chancellor to put rates up substantially, to 7 or even 7.5 per cent, to demonstrate his intention of take tough decisions while the oeed for them can plausibly be blamed on his predecessors, and simultaneously knock inflatioo oo the head and cheat the speculators.

Arguably,. once there was oothing more for speculators to go for, sterling could start to drift back to a more realistic rates against the dollar and European currencies. If that happened the export sector of the economy would feel more confident and shares could rally after the initial shock.

The logic of this analysis as far as private investors are concerned is to fix mortgage rates now for two to three years ahead (five years is too loog), but oot to commit savings for too far ahead. There are some attractive rates available, up to 7.05 per cent a year for savers who have £1,000 to invest, 7.25 per cent if you have £5,000. But there could be better offers still by mid-summer.

Best borrowing rates

	Telephone number	Account	period	APR %	Max LTV	Fixed monthly payments (£3,000 over 3 yrs) With insurance	Without insurance
FIXED RATES							
Northern Rock BS	0800 591500		4.89% to 1/6/99	95		£305	—
VARIABLE RATES							
Northern Rock BS	0800 591500		4.79% to 1/6/00	95		—	—
FIRST TIME BUYERS FIXED RATES							
Abbey National	0800 555100		4.89% to 31/7/98	95		£350	Refuse with fee
Lambeth BS	0800 225221		7.25% to 1/5/02	95%		£295	—
FIRST TIME BUYERS VARIABLE RATES							
FirstMortgage	0800 080088		3.70% for 2 yrs	90		£295	—
UNSECURED							
Royal B of Scotland	0800 121125		14.0			£114.95	£101.45
SECURED (SECOND CHARGE)					Max LTV Adv	Term	
Royal B of Scotland	0800 121121		9.0		70%	£2.5K-£100K	3 years to retirement

	Telephone	Account	Authorised % pm	Authorised APR	Unauthorised % pm	Unauthorised APR
Alliance & Leicester	0500 959595	Alliance	0.76	9.5	2.26	29.8

	Telephone	Card Type	Min Income	Rate % pm	APR %	Annual Fee	Int. free period
STANDARD							
RBS Advanta	0800 077770	Visa	—	0.79N	9.90N	nil	56 days
GOLD CARDS							
RBS Advanta	0800 077770	Visa	£20,000	0.79N	9.90N	nil	56 days

	Telephone	Payment by direct debit % PM	Payment by direct debit APR	Payment by other methods % PM	Payment by other methods APR
Marks & Spencer	01244 681681	1.87	24.8	1.97	26.3

APR Annualised percentage rate. B+C Buildings and Contents Insurance LTV Loan to value ASU Accident, sickness and unemployment
E Available to comprehensive motor insurance policyholders aged over 22 years.
H – Higher rate applies if insurance not arranged
N Introductory rate for a limited period.

All rates subject to change without notice. Source: MONEYFACTS 01892 500677 17 April 1997

Best savings rates

	Telephone number	Account	Notice or term	Deposit	Rate %	Interest interval
Sainsbury's Bank	0500 405060	Instant Access	Instant	£1	5.75	Year
			Bonus	£500	4.65	Month
Co-operative Bank	0345 252000	Save Direct	Instant	£5,000	5.50	Year
			Instant	£50,000	6.00	Year
Buckinghamshire BS	01494 873064	Chiltern Gold	Postal	£500	4.70	Year
			Postal	£5,000	5.80	1/2 Year
			Postal	£5,000	6.35	Year
			Gold	£10,000	6.40	Year
Northern Rock BS	0500 505000	Select 60	60 day P	£2,500	6.40	Year
			60 day P	£25,000	6.70	Year
Scarborough BS	0800 590578	Scarborough 100	100 day	£1,000	6.30	Year
			100 day	£10,000	6.54	Year
Kleinwort Benson	0800 317477	HICA	Instant	£2,500	5.20	Month
			Instant	£5,000	5.25	Month
Halifax BS	01422 333333	Asset Reserve	Instant	£10,000	4.25	Quarter
			Instant	£10,000	4.50	Year
Nationwide BS	0800 302010	Fixed Rate Bond	2 Year	£1,000	7.00F	Year
			1.5Y/5Y	£1,000	7.05F	Maturity
			3Y/5Y	£1,000	7.25	Maturity
			3Y/5Y	£2,500	7.30	Year
Sun Banking Corp	01438 744505	Fixed Rate with bonder	5 Year	£2,575	7.55F	Year
Bank of Ireland (GB)	0800 971971	Fixed Rate (bonder option)	5 Year	£3,000	7.50F	Year
			5 Year	£3,000	7.00	Year
			4 Year	£500	6.80	Year
			5 years	£9,000	7.85F	Year
Bank of Ireland (GB)	0800 971971	Fixed Rate TESSA	5 years	£3,000	7.50F	Year
Investec Bank (GB)	0171 626 0879	Premiere TESSA	5 years	£9,000	7.20	Year
			5 years	£500	7.00	Year
GE Financial	0181 380 5388		1 year	£5,000	5.65FN	Year
			2 Year	£3,000	6.00FN	Year
			3 years	£3,000	6.30FN	Year
Pinnacle Insurance	0101 207 9007		4 years	£3,000	6.50FN	Year
Cheshire Guernsey Ltd	01481 726885	Instant Offshore	Instant	£10,000	6.10	Year
			30 day	£10,000	6.35	Year
Irish Nationwide (GB)	01624 673373	Offshore 90 Day	90 day	£25,000	6.75	Year
			5 Year	£10,000	7.55F	Year
Investment Accounts			1 month	£20	4.75	Year
				£500	5.25	Year
				£25,000	5.50	Year
Income Bonds			3 months	£2,000	6.00	Month
				£25,000	6.25	Month
First Option Bonds			12 months	£1,000	6.00F	Year
				£20,000	6.25F	Year
Pensioner's G'teed Income Bond		Series 3	5 year	£500	7.00F	Month
Children's Bond		Issue H	5 year	£25	6.75F	Maturity

P post only F fixed rate
N net rate A All withdrawals subject at 30 day loss of interest
All rates are shown gross and are subject to change without notice.
Source: MONEYFACTS 01892 500677. 17 April 1997

DIRECT LINE RATES

SAVINGS RATES	
Direct Line Instant Access Account	
BALANCE	ANNUAL GROSS RATE
£1 – £4,999	4.50%
£5,000 – £9,999	5.00%
£10,000 – £24,999	5.60%
£25,000 – £49,999	5.75%
£50,000 – £99,999	6.00%
£100,000+	6.10%
MORTGAGE RATE	
Direct Line Standard Variable Mortgage Rate	
VARIABLE RATE	6.31%
APR	6.5%

All rates correct at 11th April 1997.

DIRECT LINE FINANCIAL SERVICES

0181 649 9099 MORTGAGES | 0181 667 1121 SAVINGS

www.directline.co.uk. Savings: ITV Teletext page 377. A Royal Bank of Scotland company.

Source: Direct Line Financial Services. For further information about either of the Direct Line products listed above, please phone the appropriate number above quoting ref. **INDBB3**

Mortgages and savings provided by Direct Line Financial Services Limited, 250 St. Vincent Street, Glasgow, G2 5SH. For savings the gross rate is the rate paid without deduction of income tax and is based on annual payment of interest. For mortgages life assurance to cover the amount of the loan and security in the form of a first legal charge (Standard Security – Scotland) over the property will be required. Direct Line mortgages from £20,000 to £300,000 are available for up to 90% of the property valuation or purchase price, whichever is the lower. Written quotations available on request. Offers subject to status. All rates quoted above are variable.

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5.5% to 8%* net income p.a. -guaranteed. Choose your income level.

*Initial Investment	100% Capital Guaranteed Net Income Rate p.a.	90% Capital Guaranteed Net Income Rate p.a.
£5,000 - £7,499	5.5%	7.2%
£7,500 - £9,999	5.75%	7.4%
£10,000 - £49,999	6%	7.7%
£50,000 - £99,999	6.1%	7.85%
£100,000+	6.2%	8%

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*Source: Micropal/LGIM, on an offer to bid basis based on all PEP charges with gross income reinvested from 01.11.95 (since launch) to 10.03.97. Past performance is not necessarily a guide to future performance. Both capital and income values may go down as well as up and you may not get back the amount invested. Tax assumptions are those currently applicable and are subject to statutory change. The value of tax relief will depend on your individual circumstances. All comparisons of cost apply to PEP investors wholly in Unit Trusts. Full written details are available on request. All statements are correct as at 10.03.97. Legal & General (Direct) Limited. Registered in England No. 2702088. Registered Office: Temple Court, 11 Queen Victoria Street, London EC4N 4TP. Representative only of the Legal & General marketing group, members of which are regulated by the Personal Investment Authority and IMRO for the purposes of recommending, advising on and selling life assurance and investment products bearing Legal & General's name.

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Legal & General Investment Management

هكذا من الأصل

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Useful brollies for inevitable rainy days

Abigail Montrose offers advice for stretching your money in a special two-page report

Snme habits are hard to break, but that is not always a bad thing. Saving is a prime example – the sooner you start the easicr it is, and soon you don't even notice.

Adnpting a savings strategy is a good idea. By deciding what you are saving for it oot only gives you something tn work towards, but makes it easier to chnose the right vehicle for your savings.

Whatever you want to save for, the first thing tn do is build up an emergency fund. This should be a minimum of three moaths' income and should be easy to get at, such as in an instant access savings accouot.

This money can then act as a cushion to tide you over in any emergency. So if an unexpected bill does land on your doormat, ynu do not have to cash in any of your investments or lose interest on your long-term savings.

Once you have built up your emergency fund, you can then look to save for specific items or events.

If you are saving for the short-term, such as a holiday or Christmas, then realistically your only option is a savings account.

In general, accounts which require you to give some notice before withdrawing your money tend to pay higher rates of interest. Similarly, postal accounts tend lo pay better rates of interest than branch-based savings accounts.

There are some notable exceptions, such as the recently formed Sainsbury's Bank instant access account. This is paying an impressive flat rate of 5.75 per cent interest on balances of £1 upwards, which is more than many accounts pay on six-figure balances. But what's good today may not he so impressive in six months time, so savers need to regularly check the rates of interest they are earning on their savings.

For those looking to save regularly for the next couple of years, perhaps to build up eoough mooey to pay for a car, a wedding or a hnuse deposit, a number of building societies and high street banks offer regular savings schemes with enhanced rates of interest.

If you are saving for the medium term (five years or more), whether it's to help fund your children through university or to turn your own dreams into reality with a Harley Davidson, you can start to look at tax-exempt accounts (Tessas) and stock market investmeot schemes.

You bave to keep a Tessa for five years to receive all the interest on your savings tax free. Tessas pay the best rates of interest amoog savings accounts, but the maximum you can save is £9,000 over the five year period. Useful to a studeot, aod well on the way to a Harley.

If you can lock your money away for five years, many institutions offer fixed-term savings boods at attractive rates. Many of these bave tiered interest rates – the more you invest, the higher the rate.

Stock market investmeots have always produced better loog-term returns than savings accounts – but their value will fluctuate in line with market moves and company performance, so it would oot be wise to put all your mooey here.

If you oeed cash in a hurry when the market is doing badly, you will not make as much as you boped – and if the market really nose-dived, you could even get back less than yoo originally invested.

Unless you have a large sum to invest – in which case the persoo to see is probably a stockbroker or independent financial adviser – most people will opt for unit trusts or investment trusts.

The most tax-efficieot way to invest in a unit trust is through a personal equity plan (PEP) which means that all the money you make is tax free.

Party-pooper: The wrong investment could mean cheese and crackers on the big day PHOTOGRAPH: MYKEL NICOLAOU

Turn 2000 in style

Millennium: Abigail Montrose raises a glass in anticipation

Where will you be on 31 December 1999? Wherever you plan to see in the new millennium it's almost certain you'll want to do so with a glass of something special in your hand at the party of a lifetime. And if you will have to pay the bill, now is the time to start saving for it.

If you put £50 a mooth uoder the mattress from oow until December 1999 you would have £1,650 to celebrate with. Better still, put the mooey into a savings account – and look around for the best deal.

Some accounts pay as little as 0.5 per cent or less interest, which means your savings, after tax, would grow by just £10.41 to £1,660.41 by December 1999. Whereas if you save in ooe of the best-paying accounts, socb as the oew Sainsbury's Baok's instaot access accouot, (5.75 per cent), your savings would grow by £122.58 to £1,772.58. Assuming, of course, the rate of interest remains unchanged.

To save for the big day, your choice is limited to savings accounts. If you were looking to save for five years or more you could consider investing in shares, but with party time less than three years away, this is not advisable.

As Ian Millward, investmeot marketing director at independent financial advisers Chase de Vere, points out: "Less than three years is too short a time-scale to invest in equities – particularly as that is the longest amount of time any of your money would be invested. If the market crashed in late 1999 you could end up eating cheese and crackers at your millennium party!"

There are several types of account on offer, and ootice accounts tend to pay higher rates. For example, Sun Banking pays 3.75 per cent interest oo its instant access account, but 4.75 per cent on its 60-day notice account. The only problem with a loog notice period is that you cannot move savings as swiftly as you may want to without a loss of interest.

Savings accounts operated by post or telepbone also tend to offer savers better rates than branch-based accounts. For example, Cheltenham & Gloucester pays 1 per ceot interest on its branch-based instant access account, 4 per cent interest on its instant access postal account, and 5.5 per cent on its 30-day ootice postal account.

Cheltenham & Gloucester will allow you to open a savings account with as little as £1, others are less accommodating. During the past year building societies have increased the opening balances on their savings accounts to £100, £500 or even £1,000. This is to stop potential carpetbaggers.

Banks and building societies change their rates so check yours every six months to make it is still competitive. If not, move elsewhere.

Rates of interest are often tiered, so while you may only get 1 per cent on savings up to £500, you may get 4 per cent on balances over this amount.

If several of you are planning to split the bill for the party of a lifetime it's worth considering Direct Line's instant access accounts, which allow investors to operate linked accounts in which the totals are added together to count towards higher rates of interest. The account pays 4.5 per cent interest oo balances up to £5,000 and 5 per cent oo balances up to £10,000.

Many building societies offer regular savings accounts with enhanced rates of interest. Typically, you must save a set amount each mooth for a minimum of at least two or three years, and the number of withdrawals is limited – generally to ooe or two each year.

Some regular savings accounts, such as Bradford & Bingley's, require you to save for at least three years if you are to receive its enhanced rate of interest of 6.5 per cent. Others require you to save for a minimum of two years or less, such as West Bromwich which is paying 6.76 per cent, and Scarborough and Nationwide which both are paying 6.5 per ceot.

And doo't forget National Savings, which offers two savings accounts. The ordinary accouot provides instant access and pays 2.5 per cent on balances of £500 or more once the account has beeo open for at least ooe year; the investment account is a 30-day notice account whicb pays 4.75 per cent on a balance of £20 and 5.25 per cent oo £500 upwards.

If you are prepared to take a bit of a gamble, of course, you could consider Premium Bonds. While you would not earn any interest, yoo could win one of Ernie's prizes.

> By December 1999, £50 a month put under a mattress would total £1,650

Women leave risks to men

Know-how: Sadly lacking

Women are mnre averse to risk than men in their savings and investmeots, according to new research by NOP. Only 12 per cent of women said they would consider an investment in which they risked a loss – compared with 32 per cent of men.

The poll, on behalf of Hill Samuel Asset Management, is one of two pieces of research that underline the buge gap between the risks and rewards of investment and the public perception of them.

As Rob Page, Hill Samuel's marketing director, put it: "These statistics clearly demonstrate the investment industry is failing to reach the mass market and convince the man in the street that stock market investment is a sensible opdon."

Andrew Buley, investment marketing manager at the TSB, whicb commissioned the other survey, was even more blunt: "It is clear from our findings that, fnr many people, savings remain a mystery."

In the Hill Samuel poll, NOP asked people how much £1,000 invested in a typical unit trust would be worth after 10 years: 29 per cent did oot know, while a further 31 per ceot thought it would bave grown to only £1,500.

Only 14 per cent thought that they would at least double their mooey over a decade.

In fact an investmeot of £1,000 in the average UK equity income trust would have turned £1,000 into £3,003 over the 10 years to last December.

There is also little knowledge of the stock market, with 55 per ceot of respondeots believing that the UK market had ended the year lower than it started at least four times since 1980. In fact it has only bappened twice – in 1990 and 1994.

Even though inflatioo is lower than for 20 years, it still worries savers: 49 per cent nf respondents said it was still a significant factor in tbeir savings and investment plans.

Investnrs' aversion to risk was not based on personal experience. Only 12 per cent nf women and 27 per cent of men had made an investment that resulted in a loss.

The findings of the Hill Samuel survey are underlined by the nther piece of recent researcb, also undertaken by NOP, which is bound to raise questions among fund managers about the effectiveness of their marketing activities.

Banks and fund managers spend millions promoting their products every year, making extensive use of direct mail – but despite this extensive advertising nnly 27 per cent could correctly identify a PEP (personal equity plan) – although a further 7 per cent knew it was some kind of tax-exempt investmeot and a similar oumber said that it was simply a saviogs or investment plan.

Only 44 per cent of those questiooed in this poll knew what a Tessa was (tax-exempt special savings account), the same oumber as the doo't knows.

Only half the sample thought that they were getting the best out of their savings; asked wby they had oot, in that case, made changes, 24 per ceot said they did oot have time, but 25 per ceot said that savings informatioo was presented in a complicated way.

For the Hill Samuel survey, NOP interviewed 938 adults by telephone during February and March.

The TSB survey, also by telepbooe, covered 1,006 respoodents during March.

To help people make more of their savings TSB has produced a Money and Savings Guide, available free from 0500 758 4000.

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£50,000 - £99,999	6.15%	4.92%
£25,000 - £49,999	6.10%	4.88%
£10,000 - £24,999	6.05%	4.84%
£5,000 - £9,999	5.55%	4.44%

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£5,000 – £24,999	6.30	5.04	6.05	4.84

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Elect to spread the risk

Trusts: Tony Lyons on how small investors can best manage their own portfolios

Stock market investments can go down as well as up...

Top performing unit trusts
%growth over 5 years

HSBC Hong Kong Growth	255.1
Mercury Gold & General	238.0
Jupiter Income	236.8
Hill Samuel UK Emerging Cos	230.0
GT Orient Accumulator	229.2
Gartmore Amer Emerging Growth	225.1
Prolific Technology	215.5
Jupiter European	210.6
Old Mutual European	207.4
Jupiter UK Growth	207.3

Top performing [illegible]
% growth over 5 years

Jupiter [illegible]	[illegible]
Hill Sam[illegible] Emerging Cos	[illegible]
Jupiter [illegible]	[illegible]
BWD [illegible]	[illegible]
Perpetual UK Exempt	[illegible]
[illegible] Recovery	[illegible]
Th[illegible] Smaller Cos	[illegible]
Britann[illegible]	[illegible]
INVESCO [illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]

Top performing investment trusts
%growth over five years

INVESCO English & International	521.1
TR European Growth	311.1
North Atlantic Smaller Cos	292.0
Primadona	266.1
First Philippine	240.6
New Zealand	221.6
[illegible] Trust	218.4
[illegible] Strata	211.0
[illegible] & Income	198.3
[illegible] Partners	198.1

Worst performing unit trusts
%growth over five years

Govett FOF Japan Index	-5.9
S&P Japan Small Cos	-10.5
M&G Japan & General Acc	-10.8
Barclays Unicorn Japan Inc	-14.5
Fidelity Japan Smaller Cos	-16.2
Friends Prov Japanese Small Cos	-19.2
Govett Japan Strategy	-20.7
Govett FOF Japan Bear	-26.6
Govett FOF UK Bear	-36.8
Govett FOF US Bear	-37.1

[illegible]
% growth over five years

M&G Smaller Cos [illegible]	[illegible]
Mayflower British Leaders	[illegible]
S&P UK Smaller Cos	52.5
GT UK Growth Inc	49.3
Thornton UK Small Cos Dividend	45.6
OM AMR British Growth Inc	40.2
Equitable Smaller Cos	40.0
Exeter High Income	39.9
Equitable Special Situations	25.9
City Financial J Siddall I&G	23.7

Worst performing investment trusts
%growth over five years

[illegible] Japanese	34.1
Fleming Emerging Markets	25.0
Latin American	24.8
Edinburgh Java	18.8
GT Japan	14.3
Baillie Gifford Japan	4.2
Korea-Europe	-4.4
INVESCO Korea	-16.1
Baillie Gifford Shin Nippon	-20.5
Korea Liberalisation	-22.8

Calculations based on offer to bid price and assume that all net income is reinvested.
Although past performance is no certain guide to the future, it is more likely that good performers will maintain their records than that they will be overtaken by those which have done badly in the past.
Note that not all the funds shown among the top performers offer monthly savings plans

Source: HSW (01625 511311)

Ordinary savers have made more money over the years by investing in stocks and shares than in any other type of investment. Over the lnng term, five years and more, equity investment, directly or indirectly through unit or investment trusts, has produced much better returns than savings in building society or other fixed interest accounts.

But general elections can create uncertainties in the stock market. At least that is what the fund management groups would like ordinary investnrs and savers to think. The financial pages of newspapers and magazines are full of advertisements extolliog the virtues of various savings schemes that will, they claim, offer greater protection against tbe political uncertainties that lie ahead.

Yet in the broad sweep of things, changes in government have only a short-term effect on stock market sentiment in this country in regard to equity investment. In the long term, the effect is minimal. The perfnrmance nf an open stock market such as Londoo depends on world-wide economic trends. Share prices over the long term move in line with global trends, particularly interest rate movements and the future prospects for company growth.

Unless you are a full-time investor, putting all your money into just one or two sbares leaves you open to an unnecessary degree of risk.

Normally, you will need investment advice from a stockbroker which comes at a price, and if the performance of ooe or more of the stocks turns sour, then you will face serious losses.

Growiog numbers of people are now managing tbeir own portfolios – often using a PC and a modem to download data from the Internet – or through an investment club.

But for most savers it makes more sense to invest in a collective investment such as unit or investment trusts, or open-ended investment companies when they become available later this year. These offer the saver a stake in a large portfolio of companies.

Of course, unit prices can go down. But by investing in a diversified basket of equities, you will bave spread your risks so that if nne of the companies in the portfolio goes belly-up, it will oot have too great an influence oo the rest of the fund.

Since John Major won the 1992 election, the FTSE 100 index has doubled in value. Over the span of his government, most investors in unit and investment trusts have dooe well.

The tables show the best- and worst-performing funds in this time. Many are specialist funds in smaller companies, particular countries or, in tbe case of investment trusts, bave large international portfolios, so the top and bottom funds investing in the UK are also shown.

There are more than 1,000 unit trusts and investment trusts to choose from and insurance companies also offer hundreds of unitised insurance funds. Some of these are riskier than others, although still less so than investing in individual shares. Past performance can provide a guide.

As a rule of thumb, investments with lowest risk are those in cash or near-cash funds – but these are unlikely to show any long-term growth. Next in line are the Index trackers, followed by general, balanced funds investing internationally or just in Britain. Highest-risk are those specialising in particular countries or sectors such as bealthcare. While these may do spectacularly well, they can also fall out of favour rapidly, so a careful watch must be kept nn them at all times.

In this context it is worth noting bow many funds iovested in Japan show up among the poor performers. For while Japanese industry may lead the way in efficiency and technology, the Tokyo stock market has slumped at a time wben other large markets have soared – and foreign investors have also suffered from adverse exchange rate movements.

It is difficult to know if the performance of some of the top funds is due to the investment ethos of the maoagement group or if it is down to the share-picking qualities of individual fund managers.

Smaller groups nften have to depend on the investmeot qualities of just one or two maoagers. If they leave to join another investmeot stable, performance can suffer dramatically.

Receotly, one of the managers who made the Finsbury Trust stable of investment trusts a leading performer has moved to a rival group and it will be interesting to see what happens to the performance of these funds. Over the lnng term some groups do appear to do better than others.

A recent survey of consistent long-term performance by *What Investment?* magazine showed that consistent good performers include Schroders, M&G, Gartmore and Fidelity. Over recent years, these have been joined by others such as Perpetual, Crédit Suisse, Jupiter, Provident Mutual, Capel-Cure Myers, Britannia and Martin Currie.

This is not to say that these groups do not have a poor performer or two in their investmeot stable. Rather, overall, tbey have more funds in the top 25 per cent of the various sectors and appear to do consistently better than their competitors.

To outperform means taking a risk. For every successful investment, there are many failures. So it will pay to remember tbat high-risk iovestments can seriously damage your wealth.

Thought for the day

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It is an ill windfall...

PEPs: Ken Welsby and Tony Lyons on how to blow £20bn

Fnllowing in the wake of Alliance & Leicester and the Colonial Mutual, the coming months will see some 20 million people become shareholders in the building societies and life offices converting to plc status. Of these, around half will own shares for the first time.

Altogether, some £20bn will be distributed in free shares. Biggest of all will be the Halifax which demutualises in June which will be one nf the largest companies in the FTSE 100 with an expected value in excess of £12bn.

While many will decide to sell their shares immediately, holding on could prove more sensible. The precedent of Abbey National – which joined the stock market in 1989 – shows the benefits of not selling windfall shares right away. Since its flotatinn the price of its shares has climbed from the initial 130p to around 790p today. So anyone whn had £1,000 worth of shares in the company when it cooverted would oow have a holding worth almost £6,080 today – in addition to a dividend every year.

Even better: if you put your windfall shares into a PEP all the income and capital gains are tax-free.

Although people often talk about investing in a PEP, strictly speaking you can't: a PEP is simply a tax-free wrapper that contains other investments – including shares and unit trusts.

There are hundreds of different PEPs to choose from – from banks, fund managers and stockbrokers, as well as the converting mutuals themselves. But to make sure you make the most nf your windfall shares it's worth doing some hnmework before making a decision.

To comply with Inland Revenue rules, you must have completed the transfer into the PEP within 42 days from the date on which the shares are issued – which will be some days before the date on which you receive the paperwork.

There are two main types nf plan: general and single-company. To qualify for tax-free status, general PEPs can hold shares worth up to £6,000 in many companies, and pnt a further £3,000 in a single-company plan.

These are annual figures. You can invest in one of each type of PEP each tax year – every year. So if you are in line for free shares from more than one company it makes sense to put them in a general PEP.

Remember that, since your free shares cost nothing, they don't count towards the £6,000 limit. You can consider using them as the foundations of a tax-free market portfolio, by adding a lump sum, or through a monthly savings plan.

The building societies that are converting have their own plans, but these may not nffer the best deal because they will only accept their own shares. As Clifford German reports on page 27, mnre fund managers are announcing their windfall plans every week – so, unless you are an Alliance & Leicester investor, it may be sensible to watch developments, but make no final decisions until May-end.

In this context there is one last rule to remember: you can only have one PEP manager. So if you want to hold on to the shares through a PEP, check that the plan manager is an investment group that will let you retain them, rather tban simply taking them into their fund in exchange for units.

Not all the windfall PEP arrangements are simple. Some schemes bave complex rules so it is worth taking time to study the small print. It sounds more complicated than it is. But you should follow a few simple rules:

❒ Send for information from several fund management groups which advertise special windfall arrangements and read the literature they send – and if you are oot sure on any point, telephone them and ask. (Many funds have free or low-cost numbers.)

❒ Bear in mind that although a fund's past record is not a certain guide tn the future, good performers are more likely to continue doing well tban the also-rans are to overtake them.

❒ Don't put all your eggs in one basket. Share prices fluctuate – and if you need cash you could be forced to sell at the wrong time.

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TO FIND OUT **WHAT'S ON TV, WHERE TO GO AND WHEN,** READ TODAY'S **eye**

Serena Mackesy
In my week

Groups form – a dozen or more bad haircuts crowding up to the glass to pull faces at us, take photos, point, fall about laughing

Neil reclines on a set of ethnic cushions in a white lace Dolce and Gabbana shirt, sunglasses primed against the light which streams through the plate glass. One arm behind his head and his feet propped on the edge of a red wooden bowl filled with copies of *The Face*, his copy of *Macbeth* is tucked down to the side of his thigh, out of sight. He's been learning the dagger speech ready for the new term at the Guildhall. "People," he says, "get really fascinated when you're kipping. They form really big knots then. They don't feel like you're looking back at them."

People are forming knots as he speaks. We are sitting in the window of Selfridges being living mannequins, so to some extent we are asking for it. "There was this guy," says Neil, "when I was in here with Lucille one afternoon. He sat down on the bench opposite the window for about an hour, just glaring at us. And then he got up and started banging on the window, trying to get Lucille's attention. He was going "You shouldn't be with that guy! He's mad! You should be with a girl!". He drinks from a bottle of mineral water; it's equatorially hot and the sweat is pouring off us.

Oxford Street is a classic illustration of crowd psychology in action. As people pass us, they react by pretending they aren't. Nobody walks past a shop window and makes out that they're not looking at it in normal circumstances. But that's what they do: keep their faces pointed forward while straining from the corners of their eyes.

Some stop once they get to the edge of the window, as if convinced that we can't see them there. Others make a couple of passes, burning up the pavement in their frenzy not to seem directly interested. But everyone is unwilling to actually stop and gawp until someone else has given them a lead. When that happens, groups form, and quickly lose their inhibitions: a dozen or more bad haircuts crowding up to the glass to pull faces at us, take photos, point, fall about laughing.

"It really is like being an animal in a zoo," says Neil. "They do the weirdest things, like coming up to the glass and tickling it at the level where your feet are, the way people try to get fish in aquariums to notice them." They resort to less subtle approaches, as well.

Some people stick with waving and grimacing; an aged hippy woman with hennaed hair starts writing messages to Neil on the window with her finger. She is, of course, writing backwards; he performs an elaborate French-style shrug. She shrugs back.

Then the ugly boys arrive. Three of them, in Umbro sweatshirts, on the platform of a No 98 bus. They point, and waggle their shoulders with ugly boy gracelessness. Then they jump off, and take turns to walk past the window clutching their crotches. I ignore them. They don't like this, and come back again, taking longer about it this time. Then they get frustrated. The fat one with the shaved head goes over to where Neil is sitting, pulls an ugly face and gobs on the window. They elbow each other in congratulation over this masterstroke of wit, and lope lumpenly off. "We'll have to get someone to wash that off," says Neil mildly.

Nicky climbs in over the backdrop, dressed in party clothes, and drops onto her bum on our side. She usually works on the shop floor, but has been seconded for the week, presumably because she is so beautiful. "It's weird how aggressive some people can get," she says. "I was sitting with another girl, and this woman came along with a baby in a pushchair. She just stopped on the pavement and stood there screaming at us. We could hear her through the glass. She was going "Fuck off, fuck off you bitches" – she kept it up for ages."

Some software salesmen – we can tell they're software salesmen because they are wearing suits and polyester ties – gather to imitate our hand movements and peer down my cleavage. As all women are aware, our secondary sexual characteristics are a source of endless fascination for the weaker sex; usually, though, they limit their activities to sneaking glances when they think your concentration is elsewhere. The fact of one's being on display removes this inhibition. Now the stares are full-on, with transfixed smiles of joy like a kid in a sweetshop. The funny thing is, rather than pulling the old "Excuse me, I'm up here" routine, I find that I don't really mind. It's all part of a day's work, after all.

An old lady with crumpled red lipstick spends five minutes minutely examining every object on display, standing on tiptoes to peer into the bowl, bending down to look at the floor cushions, but never once directs a glance at any of us. A girl in black rushes up to the window, taps on it, and Nicky jumps to her feet. "It's my best friend from when I was little!" she says, then shouts "Meet you in handbags!" and bounces over the backdrop like a young gazelle.

"Oh, look," says Neil. I turn back to the street. A skinny man in jeans with shoulder-length grey hair stands in front of me, waggling his hips from side to side like the serial killer in *The Silence of the Lambs*. He lifts up his T-shirt to give me a full-frontal of his nipples. Then, laughing, he dances away up the pavement.

Lie back and think of elephant

Robert Hanks
the week on radio

We imagine that we are all blind when we listen to the radio – that since there are no pictures to look at, a blind person and a sighted person are listening to *Gardeners' Question Time* or Simon Mayo on roughly equal terms. A few seconds thought suggests that this can't really be true, though. You can't really understand a blind person's experience of the world by shutting your eyes and groping your way around the house for 10 minutes: to be blind is not simply to have the pictures taken away, any more than radio is simply television without the pictures – a point movingly demonstrated in **Touching the Elephant** (Wednesday, Radio 4).

Matt Thompson's feature borrowed its premise from the old Indian fable of the blind men disputing the nature of an elephant they've come across: one feels its trunk, and thinks it is some sort of snake; one gropes its leg and deduces it must be a tree, and so forth. Taking this rather literally, *Touching the Elephant* confronted four blind people with an elephant at London Zoo.

The most interesting part of the programme, and the part it's easiest to talk about, was the initial interviews, when Kim Normanton asked the four what they expected from an elephant. All of them knew that it was big, and that it had a trunk; but after that their ideas diverged wildly. Danni knew that it would have big ears, but imagined them standing up, like an Alsatian's; Lauren, a 10-year-old with a vivid imagination, got pretty well all the details right until she was asked how it would feel: furry, was her guess.

Tom, a piano-tuner with a philosophical bent, got closest with a description couched in fairly abstract terms: "You couldn't but be overwhelmed by the size of the thing, and you would have to look up at it... You would have to be amazed and perhaps appalled by the trunk and the tusks... which must mean, I think, that it doesn't really have a face." Elephant enthusiasts may disagree, but I think this is not a bad way of describing the way so many incongruous features are pulled together on an elephant's head.

But the programme still illustrated an extraordinary gulf not so much between the sighted and the blind (especially those who have never seen, who have no visual memories to refer to). In the most obvious sense, it's a difference between the haves and the have-nots; but, without being sentimental or pretentious about it, the programme drew you to the view that it cuts both ways. Asked what she thought of sighted people, Danni said: "They take things for granted quite a lot, in life." The programme bore that out, especially in the final encounters with the elephant, when all four were excited, overjoyed even, at meeting a creature whose size and strangeness is for most of us commonplace. This was more touching than I would have believed.

Along the way, Tom mentioned that blind people have excellent memories, which he felt might give him something in common with the elephant. He didn't say whether, as popular myth has it, they can also tell when somebody is lying by the sound of his voice. Not that this talent would be much use today. The most depressing feature of the election campaign has been that politicians no longer bother lying; they simply fail to state anything substantial enough to be called the truth.

Listening to **Today** earlier this week, when John Humphrys was trying to get Michael Portillo to give a firm answer about his views on Europe, I had a sudden intuition that this must be what it's like to grope your way around an elephant. Only much, much less fun.

Lights, camera, politicians

Jasper Rees
the week on television

During the 1992 election, everybody deplored the fact that the campaign was wholly conducted on the virtual stump of the television screen. This time round, we've all accepted the centrality of the small screen's role, and are far more exercised by the politicians' new addiction to negative campaigning. In 2002, that in turn will have become part of the electoral furniture, and we'll all get a lot more hot and bothered about some other novelty of the hustings: the television debate between the prime ministerial candidates, perhaps, that will surely come to pass next time round.

It's only appropriate that there will be no debate between the party leaders, as there has been no debate between anyone else. You only wish some candidate or other would own up to a cocaine habit, so that for a change we could all deplore a different sort of party line. But the cancellation of the leaders' debate is mainly regrettable because we will never know the answer to the intriguing question of which monstrous ego would have had the satisfaction of chairing it. The channels would no doubt have had as much difficulty bartering over this one as the parties did their own differences. Our Dimbleby or yours? The patrician one or the squirty one?

They might have had to go for a compromise candidate inoffensive to all (as opposed to Jeremy Paxman, who is offensive to all). Someone like Vincent Hanna. He has been chairing some editions of **Around Midnight** (C4, Mon, Tues, Wed and Thurs) with a refreshing disdain for the conventional solemnities of the job. On Monday's edition he advised panellists that negative debating techniques would be met with a blast from his klaxon. The camera gleefully caught an appalled Ann Widdicombe shaking her buffalo head in disgust.

Because the programme goes out at the witching hour, the normal rules of smooth presentation have been relaxed. Hanna fluffs his lines from the teleprompt, and reprimands others for telling jokes, on which he has granted himself a monopoly, while much of the verbal swordplay is thrillingly childish. Monday brought the surreal novelty of Billy Bragg, having offered his thoughts to the panel in speech, singing in the commercial break with one of his polemics. No one clapped. But Michael Mansfield, groovy old so-and-so that he is, visibly nodded his head to the beat.

Hanna discounts himself because he's too busy showboating to be a ruthless chair. With three male candidates, political correctness deems that the referee ought to have been a woman. Which one, though? Sheena MacDonald, the only Celtic candidate who isn't called Kirsty, took over from Hanna on Wednesday and Thursday and, with more civilised women panellists, kept better order. Over on **ITV 500** (ITV, Mon), in front of the big-headed constituents of Basildon, Sue Lawley ruled the three men who would be Chancellor with a rod of iron. So much so that poor little Alan Beith was granted embarrassingly few chances to say his piece. Lawley last interviewed politicians about policy on *Nationwide*, when Labour were previously in power. You can see why she's moved on to the more intimate business of shamelessly grilling people like Gordon Brown about their sexuality on *Desert Island Discs*. The iron rod was deployed with a certain shrillness. Whenever she raised her voice, it shot up an octave. If she'd got any shriller, her Black Country accent, ruthlessly buried in the cause of self-advancement like most of the Labour Party's articles of faith, might have spontaneously disinterred itself. As New Labour are going to win, maybe New Lawley should have won too.

On the extra edition of **Newsnight** (BBC2, Sat), Harry Enfield's spoof party political broadcasts even-handedly highlighted the absurdities of all three candidates: Blair's beatific rictus, Major's heartbreaking mundanity, Ashdown's antiquated, pre-decimal vocabulary. (One benefit of joining the ERM is that the word "penny" would once and for all end up down the toilet where it has been figuratively spent all these years.) The real thing from Labour (all channels, Tues) brought home how stupid and suggestible politicians think voters are. But one by-product of television's role as the conduit of the campaign is that the electorate is more media-literate than ever before, and will have found it much harder to fall for Blair's bulldog than they would have in 1979. It just left you thinking of a third syllable of which both "bull" and "dog" are frequently the prefix.

Whatever happened to? Anneka Rice

Grain of Rice

A new phenomenon hits our screens in 1982. Anneka Rice: blonde-haired, blue eyed, aged mid-20s. Not all that new then. But in a new format: via helicopter, scouring the country on behalf of two studio contestants to find a £1,000 prize. *Treasure Hunt*, a leading show in the new Channel 4's line-up has her as the "original high octane Heidi" *(The Mail)*, in lurid stretch-to-fit cat-suit running to get that prize. And the position of the camera means we always get a view of one part of her anatomy as it chases her. People want to get to the bottom of the question as to why she is always in the news. In 1986 she wins Miss Rear of the Year. Followed by more success with Television Personality of the Year in 1987. She then finds happiness with marriage to theatre-promoter Nick Allott in 1988.

Rice of passage

But after having a baby in 1989, she is replaced on *Treasure Hunt* by Annabel Croft. She'd become, according to her Channel 4 commissioning editor, "rather screechy".

She hits back with *Challenge Anneka* in the same year, which instead of her running for clues against the clock has her building things and talking to people against the clock, as part of the BBC's drive down-market. She delivers £500,000 worth of aid to Malawi and renovates an orphanage in Romania.

Rice girl

But a survey by *Esquire* in August 1992 on the sexual preferences of middle-class men between the ages of 18 and 45 gives Patsy Kensit the top vote at 21 per cent, with Anneka a lowly five per cent.

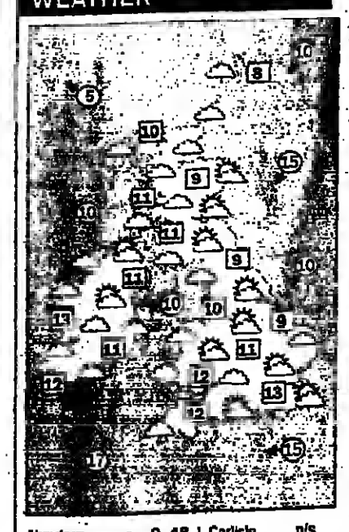
Stop the clock

Challenge Anneka is scrapped, with viewing figures down from 12 to 8 million in October 1993 and after *A Holiday of a Lifetime* ends too she buys a Cotswold country cottage in 1994 for semi-retirement – "I just want some peace". But some consider her a national asset. Jane Gordon of *The Mail* suggests she get involved with bigger projects, including helping to speed up the building of the British Library.

Today echoes another view – that "what people would really like to see is Anneka herself sent on a holiday of a lifetime. To the North Pole."

James Aufenast

WEATHER



The British Isles

General Summary and Outlook:

England and Wales will start cloudy, perhaps with a little rain over the hills in western areas. However, brighter weather in the east will spread westwards to most places leaving a fine afternoon with good sunny spells, although it will be rather cool. Western Scotland and Northern Ireland should also brighten up after a cloudy start with a much better chance of some decent sunshine this afternoon. Eastern Scotland will be rather cold but dry and bright with sunshine at times.

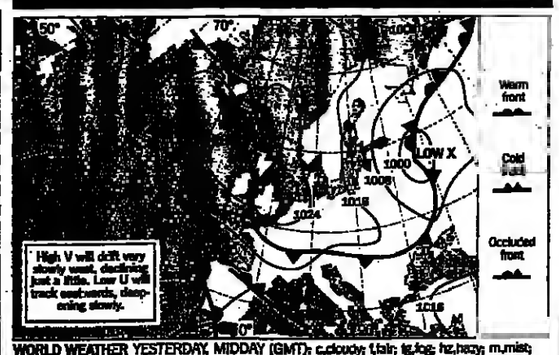
Tomorrow, Northern Ireland and southern Scotland will be dry and bright, but northern Scotland will turn overcast with light rain later. Meanwhile, any early fog and frost will clear rapidly to leave a fine day over England and Wales with some sunshine, although there may be some duller interludes near North Sea coasts. On Monday and Tuesday it will stay cloudy in northern Scotland with patchy light rain. The rest of the UK will be mostly dry with variable amounts of sunshine.

Aberdeen	r	9	48	Carlisle	n/s			Isles of Scilly	s	11	52
Anglesey	c	11	52	Cork	c	10	50	Jersey	s	13	55
Ayr	n/e			Dover	c	10	50	Lincoln	n/a		
Belfast	c	11	52	Dublin	c	10	50	Liverpool	c	12	54
Birmingham	c	9	48	Edinburgh	c	12	54	Lizard	f	12	54
Blackpool	c	10	50	Exeter	c	13	55	London	c	11	52
Bournemouth	f	13	55	Glasgow	c	11	52	Manchester	c	11	52
Brighton	c	12	54	Guernsey	c	11	52	Newcastle	c	12	54
Bristol	r	11	52	Inverness	c	9	48	Nottingham	n/a		
Cardiff	c	9	48	Ipswich	c	8	46	Oxford	c	9	48

Plymouth	s	13	55	Dhahran	n/a		
Ronaldsway	c	12	54	Florence	s	17	63
Scarborough	c	10	50	Frankfurt	c	15	59
Shrewsbury	c	10	50	Geneva	f	12	54
Southampton	c	12	54	Gibraltar	c	20	68
Southend	c	10	50	Helsinki	f	3	37
St Andrews	c	11	52	Hong Kong	fg	25	77
Stornoway	r	8	46	Istanbul	c	a	46
Tiree	c	11	52	Jerusalem	s	16	61
York	c	10	50	Jo'burg	c	21	70
				K. Lumpur	c	32	90
				Lisbon	c	20	68
				Los Angeles	c	18	64
				Madrid	c	17	63
				Majorca	c	15	59
				Malta	c	15	59
				Melbourne	s	15	59
				Montreal	c	6	43
				Moscow	c	12	54

Munich	n/a						
New York	r	12	54				
Nice	f	15	59				
Nicosia	f	20	68				
Paris	s	16	61				
Prague	f	14	57				
Reykjavik	c	7	45				
Rio de Jan	c	28	82				
Riyadh	c	27	81				
Rome	f	15	59				
Stockholm	sn	5	41				
Sydney	f	19	66				
Tenerife	c	20	68				
Tokyo	c	21	70				
Venice	s	15	59				
Vienna	c	13	55				
Warsaw	c	9	48				
Washington	r	11	52				
Wellington	n/a						

Europe and The World



WORLD WEATHER YESTERDAY, MIDDAY (GMT): c,cloudy; f,fair; fg,fog; hz,hazy; m,mist; r,rain; sn,snow; s,sunny; th,thunder. *previous day's figure at local time.

Athens	f	14	57	Dhahran	n/a			Munich	n/a						
Auckland	c	18	64	Florence	s	17	63	New York	r	12	54				
B. Aires	c	0	32	Frankfurt	c	15	59	Nice	f	15	59				
Bangkok	c	37	99	Geneva	f	12	54	Nicosia	f	20	68				
Barcelona	r	12	54	Gibraltar	c	20	68	Paris	s	16	61				
Beirut	s	18	64	Helsinki	f	3	37	Prague	f	14	57				
Belgrade	c	14	57	Hong Kong	fg	25	77	Reykjavik	c	7	45				
Berlin	c	8	46	Istanbul	c	a	46	Rio de Jan	c	28	82				
Bombay	c	30	86	Jerusalem	s	16	61	Riyadh	c	27	81				
Brussels	f	10	50	Jo'burg	c	21	70	Rome	f	15	59				
Budapest	c	12	54	K. Lumpur	c	32	90	Stockholm	sn	5	41				
Cairo	s	24	75	Lisbon	c	20	68	Sydney	f	19	66				
Cape Town	c	21	70	Los Angeles	c	18	64	Tenerife	c	20	68				
Casablanca	f	21	70	Madrid	c	17	63	Tokyo	c	21	70				
Christchurch	c	15	59	Majorca	c	15	59	Venice	s	15	59				
Copenhagen	c	8	46	Malta	c	15	59	Vienna	c	13	55				
Corfu	c	15	59	Melbourne	s	15	59	Warsaw	c	9	48				
Darwin	f	33	91	Montreal	c	6	43	Washington	r	11	52				
Dhahran	c	30	86	Moscow	c	12	54	Wellington	n/a						

AA Roadwatch

London. The Strand. Closed westbound for resurfacing between Lancaster Place and Trafalgar Square. Expect long delays in the area.

Bristol, M5 J18-19. Contraflow in operation across the Avonmouth Bridge with a 50mph speed limit. Regular rush-hour delays.

Staffordshire, A50 Stoke-On-Trent. Major construction work at Meir. Long peak-time delays.

West Yorkshire, M1 J47. Major long-term-term roadworks continue around the Leeds junction with lane and speed restrictions. Expect delays on the M1, M621 and Dewsbury Road.

City of Edinburgh, M8 J2. Major roadworks, with lane closures on the roundabout at J2 (Newbridge Spur M9). Delays possible.

Buckinghamshire, M40 J1a-3. Long-term roadworks with a contraflow between J1a (M25) and J3 (Wycombe East).

Surrey M25 J8-10. Various restrictions and lane closures both ways between Reigate and the A3 as major widening work continues.

Out and about with AA Roadwatch call 0336 401 for the latest local and national traffic news. Source: The Automobile Association. Calls charged at 39p per min (cheap rate) 49p per min (all other times) inc VAT.

The Sky at Night

The radiant of the Lyrid meteors rises in the NE about 9pm BST and is high in the SE sky by 3.30am BST

In the week ahead, planet Earth ploughs through the stream of dusty debris left in space by the passage of Comet Thatcher. The consequence for sky watchers is the possible sighting of meteors belonging to the Lyrid shower. This is not normally a spectacular shower – perhaps 10 or 15 per hour at its peak, which is expected in the early hours of Tuesday the 22nd. It is, however, unpredictable, springing a surprise show of up to 10 times as many meteors on the odd occasion.

The radiant point between Lyra and Hercules rises over the north-east horizon around 9pm BST. Best meteor prospects are after midnight and into the pre-dawn hours, though the glare of the full Moon makes conditions unfavourable for serious meteor counting this year. Comet Thatcher was discovered in 1861 and is not itself due to return again until 2275, but records of its legacy to our April skies date back more than 2000 years.

Jacqueline Mitton

Lighting up Times

Today			Tomorrow		
London	8:04pm	to 5:54am	London	8:05pm	to 5:52am
Bristol	8:14pm	to 6:04am	Bristol	8:15pm	to 6:02am
Birmingham	8:13pm	to 5:59am	Birmingham	8:15pm	to 5:57am
Manchester	8:17pm	to 5:58am	Manchester	8:19pm	to 5:56am
Newcastle	8:19pm	to 5:52am	Newcastle	8:21pm	to 5:49am
Glasgow	8:32pm	to 5:59am	Glasgow	8:34pm	to 5:57am
Belfast	8:35pm	to 6:10am	Belfast	8:37pm	to 6:08am

Air Quality

Yesterday's Readings	NO_2	SO_2
London	Moderate	Good
S England	Good	Good
Wales	Good	Good
C England	Moderate	Good
N England	Good	Good
Scotland	Good	Good
N Ireland	Good	Good

Outlook for Today	NO_2	SO_2
London	Moderate	Good
S England	Moderate	Good
Wales	Good	Good
C England	Moderate	Good
N England	Good	Good
Scotland	Good	Good
N Ireland	Good	Good

High Tides

	AM	HT	PM	HT
London	0.09	5.9	12.44	6.3
Liverpool	10.11	8.2	22.33	8.3
Avonmouth	5.44	11.2	18.12	11.5
Hull (Albert Dock)	5.06	6.5	17.20	6.7
Greenock	11.28	3.0	-	-
Dun Laoghaire	9.51	3.5	22.22	3.4

Sun and Moon

Sun rises 5:56am
Sun sets 8:04pm

Moon rises 4:34pm
Moon sets 4:44am

Full Moon: April 22

TODAY'S TELEVISION

Gerard Gilbert recommends **Shoot Out in Swansea** Sat 10.40pm BBC2
To the Ends of the Earth Sun 8pm C4

Remember all those films which tried selling themselves as "this year's *Four Weddings and a Funeral*"? Well, now it's *Trainspotting* which is finding its name bandied about like a lucky charm. In the case of *Twin Town*, a raucous tale of joy-riding and drug-taking in Swansea, it's "the Welsh *Trainspotting*" – enough to prejudice you against a movie before it starts. Such brazen dressing up in another movie's success.

Shoot Out in Swansea: the Making of Twin Town (Sat BBC2) sounds like one of those behind-the-scenes movie plugs that pad out ITV's weekend afternoon schedules. Happily it's not, rather it takes a candid look at the often fraught realities of making a low-budget British movie – squeezing an eight-week shoot into six weeks with a first-time director at the wheel. This turns nut tn be Kevin Allen, brother of bad boy Keith, and whom I once saw fronting a video diary about Italia 90 and, more recently, playing one of the sneering plain clothes coppers in *The Thin Blue Line*. He seems remarkably relaxed about the responsibility – ignorance is bliss perhaps – so relaxed, in fact, that the producer virtually sleeps on his shoulder, much to Allen's chagrin. Ob well, at least he gets his revenge on older brother Keith for all those ritual humiliations of teenage boyhood – posing him balf way up a windswept Welsh hillside with a sheep munching at his crutch. "Don't worry, she won't bite," says the farmer. We won't ask.

In which situations, exactly, does Kenny Dalglish unclench his teeth and start becoming expansive and voluble? I always imagined that whilst playing 18 holes with his famous chum, Alan Hansen, Kenny would unwind, but that was before I saw **The Sack Race** (Sat BBC2), Hansen's look at the pressures and pitfalls of football management. Maybe it's just the presence of cameras, but, gently quizzed by his mate on the fairways of some north-eastern golf course, Dalglish is as tight-lipped as at a post-defeat match conference.

Nnt that any of the managers we see in action in the balf-time dressing ronms seem to have a clue about psychology nt man management. They just stand bellowing at the collective (ie no one in particular) while the players stare glumly at their boots. And what exactly does "think positive" mean to someone returning to the pitch. Surely he wants something more specific like "knobble their number seven".

If you've evet idly wondered about whatever happened to Kelly McGillis, the slightly bovine beauty whose piercing blue-eyed glances at Tom Cruise in *Top Gun* and at Harrison Ford in *Witness* are now part of movie iconography – then tune in to **Bitter Blood** (Sat, Sun BBC1). This two-part mini series states immediately that it's based on real events (ie no dramatist would dare) and finds a semi-crazy McGillis shacking up with a mad survivalist (Harry Hamlin in a beard) and plotting against her former husband (Keith Carradine).

Everyman (Sun BBC1) checks ont the shortlist of those likely to be the next Pope (apparently "the papacy of John Paul II is entering its final phase"), going behind the scenes to reveal some nf the secrets of the Cnnclave, the Papal election process. **To the Ends of the Earth** (Sun C4) goes in the opposite direction, deep into the Haitian countryside to meet a certain Wilfrid Dorissant, a man who has made legal history by being recognised by the authorities as a zombie (his uncle is accused of doing it to bim). The first encounter finds Dorissant beld in stocks, "because he doesn't have a spirit". I wondet if tbe same might work for Liverpool FC.

BBC 1

7.00 Children's BBC: Harry and the Hendersons. 7.25 News, Weather. 7.30 Felix the Cat. 7.45 Phantom 2040. 8.10 The Real Adventures of Jonny Quest. 8.35 The Flintstones.
9.00 Live and Kicking. Zoë Ball and *Jamie Theakston present a special* end-of-series show. Guests Gary Barlow and Michelle Gayle provide the music *(S) (18780398)*.
12.12 Weather *(4154987)*.
12.15 Grandstand. Introduced by Steve Rider *(4153258)*. 12.20 Football Focus *(6080987)*. 1.00 News *(22239155)*. 1.05, 3.40, 4.00 World Snooker. *Live coverage from* the Crucible Theatre, Sheffield of today's first-round matches. 1.50, 2.25, 2.55, 3.25 Racing. From Newbury, featuring races at 2.00, 2.30, 3.00 and 3.25. 2.10 Curling. Highlights from the semi-finals of the men's and women's World Championship from Berne, Switzerland *(42922277)*. 2.40, 3.10 Motorcycling. From the British Superbike Championship from Donington Park *(5486906)*. 3.50 Football Half-Times *(9565074)*. 4.40 Final Score *(2377529)*.
5.20 News, Weather *(T) (8767703)*.
5.30 Local News, Weather *(729345)*.
5.35 Cartoon *(769155)*.
5.45 Dad's Army. Private Pike receives his call-up papers *(R)(T) (633600)*.
6.15 The New Adventures of Superman *(S)(T) (320432)*.
7.00 Whatever You Want. Gaby Roslin fixes it for three amateur golfers to train with Nick Faldo's coach, David Ledbetter, in Florida. Plus, three *dog-owners have their pets* audition for a TV commercial *(S)(T) (183258)*.
7.50 The National Lottery Live. Prefab Sprout perform their new single *(S)(T) (371277)*.
8.10 Crime Traveller. Holly suspects that she may not be the only one with a time machine and Slade becomes jealous when a figure from Holly's past appears. Last in this jolly time-travel crime series *(S)(T) (246987)*.
9.00 Bitter Blood. *See Preview, above (S)(T) (2548)*.
10.30 News, Sport, Weather *(T) (92838)*.
11.00 Match of the Day. The possibly title-deciding match between Liverpool *and Manchester United at Anfield is* the main event. Barry Davies was there *(S)(T) (398451)*.
12.05 They Think It's All Over. Boxer Steve Collins is the repeat guest *(R) (S)(T) (3462961)*.
12.35 World Snooker *(5623049)*.
1.35 Top of the Pops. Kavana, Texas, Shola Ama and DJ Quicksilver are live in the studio *(S)(T) (3080730)*.
1.45 FILM Pigeons (John Dexter 1970 US). Alienated Princeton graduate Jordan Christopher takes to cab-driving in swinging New York City in this smug counter-culture tale otherwise known as "The Sidelong Glances of a Pigeon Kicker". Pretentious? Moi? *(1223914)*.
2.35 Weather *(8355830)*. *To 2.40am.*

BBC 2

6.20 Open University: Of Fish and People – Modelling a Muddle *(2450548)*. 16th-Century Venice and Antwerp *(2113109)*. 6.45 Electrons and Atoms *(4421646)*. 7.10 Shooting Video History *(1808548)*. 8.00 Open Saturday *(368277)*.
10.30 World Championship Snooker. David Vine introduces tha start of the 1997 Embassy World Championship from the Crucibla Theatre, Sheffield. Stephen Hendry hopes to be the first man to win the title seven times if he goes all the way this year. His first game is against Andy Hicks *(S) (80591432)*.
12.15 Film 97 with Barry Norman. Woody Allen's *Everyone Says I Love You*, and Val Kilmer as *The Saint (R) (569906)*.
12.45 FILM Stagecoach (John Ford 1939 US). Ford's hugely influential western, set, like so many to come, in Arizona's Monument Valley. Wounded, vengeance-seeking outlaw John Wayne is picked up by a stagecoach full of characterful archetypes (boozy doc, cynical gambler, crooked banker, and so forth – the dubious emissaries of the coming civilisation). Enter the Apaches, for a classic finale (T) *(47447180)*.
2.20 FILM Death of a Gunfighter (Allen Smithee 1969 US). The director's credit is pseudonymous – it was in fact Don Siegel who finished off this rather fine western starring Richard Widmark as *the gunfighter-turned-marshal who,* after 20 years, is told by the town council that he must resign. When he refuses, they have no option but to have him gunned down *(6841513)*.
3.50 The Saint *(3590722)*.
4.40 World Championship Snooker. David Vine introduces further first-round coverage from Sheffield *(77253708)*.
6.15 Travels with Pevsner. Writer Michael Bracewell travels to Surrey, seeking out buildings which tell the story of the creation of suburbia, including two masterpieces by Lutyens and the Beehive, the modernistic heart of the original Gatwick airport *(S)(T) (177277)*.
7.05 Newsnight. Jeremy Paxman and more election banter *(819161)*.
8.05 Close Up. Stephen Woolley discusses a scene from *Gun Crazy (R)(S) (741285)*.
8.10 Call of the Sea. Recalls the 1930s heyday of the fishing fleet when there were more than 50,000 British fishermen making a living from the sea *(521180)*.
8.50 Till Death Us Do Part *(R) (672141)*.
9.20 Have I Got News for You. New series of the satirical news quiz, with special guest Swampy *(R) (295277)*.
9.50 The Sack Race. *See Preview, above (S)(T) (554890)*.
10.40 Shoot Out in Swansea – the Making of Twin Town. *See Preview, above (T) (8616529)*.
11.45 FILM Boyz N the Hood (John Singleton 1991 US). 23-year-old Singleton's impressive debut gives an authentic-*seeming portrait of street life in the* gang-infested Los Angeles of the late 1980s. The tale itself is old-fashioned: two friends, one gets involved with the gangs – but can the other stay on the straight and narrow and get a college education? With Cuba Gooding Jr, Ice Cube and Larry Fishburne *(946093)*.
1.35 Later with Jools Holland. With Everything but the Girl and Burning Spear *(R)(S) (3121469)*. *To 2.45am.*

ITV/LWT

6.00 GMTV: 6.00 News. 6.10 Professor Bubble. 6.30 Bananas in Pyjamas. 6.50 Our House. 7.15 The Wuzzles. 7.45 Disney's Wake Up in the Wild Room. 8.55 Power Rangers Zeo.
9.25 Scratchy and Co *(S) (91297890)*.
11.30 The Chart Show *(S) (13987)*.
12.30 Love Bites *(24971)*.
1.00 News, Weather *(T) (22320451)*.
1.05 London Weekend Today *(22329722)*.
1.10 Uefa Champions' League Special *(70519161)*.
1.40 Stuntmasters *(R) (22036613)*.
2.10 FILM The Likely Lads (Michael Tuchner 1976 UK). Decent big-screen spin-off finds Bob, Thelma, Terry and Terry's Finnish girlfriend on a caravaning trip. *(777513)*.
3.45 SeaQuest DSV *(S)(T) (893155)*.
4.45 News, Sport, Weather *(T) (1370971)*.
5.05 London Weekend Tonight *(6875258)*.
5.20 Clueless *(S)(T) (2487285)*.
5.45 New Baywatch. Return of the red swimsuit set. We rediscover the boys and girls in training to be fire-fighters *(S)(T) (198155)*.

Boyz N the Hood 11.45pm BBC2
Cuba Gooding Jr and Ice Cube face a bleak future in 1980s gangland LA

6.35 You've Been Framed! *(R) (357277)*.
7.05 Barrymore. Honor Blackman is one of the lanky one's guests *(S)(T) (825722)*.
8.00 News, Weather, Lottery Result *(T) (787109)*.
8.15 Stars in Their Eyes. A Glaswegian butcher pretending to be Jon Bon Jovi and a sales clerk doing his Paul Young are among this week's contestants. Matthew Kelly hosts *(S)(T) (515529)*.
9.00 Cracker – the Movie. Actually a repackaged three-part story from 1994 called "Men Should Weep". Someone is attacking women with chilling precision – leaving no evidence *(R) (68349838)*.
11.35 FILM The Danger of Love (Joyce Chopra 1992 US). The prime suspect in a murder investigation is the lover of the dead woman's husband. Joe Penny and Jenny Robertson star (S)(T) *(476819)*.
1.15 FILM Murder Elite (Claude Whatham 1985 UK). Ali MacGraw plays a woman who, after wasting her inheritance on a string of no-good boyfriends, is forced to move in with her older sister (Billie Whitelaw) who runs a stud farm in a remote corner of the English countryside. Then the murders start happening *(498117)*.
3.15 E! News Review *(4752204)*.
4.05 Club Nation *(R)(S) (4874204)*.
5.00 Night Shift *(2196223)*. *To 5.05am.*

Channel 4

6.00 Sesame Street *(R) (4350277)*.
7.05 The Adventures of Sonic the Hedgehog *(R)(S) (6935695)*.
7.35 Creepy Crawlers *(R)(S) (4098180)*.
8.00 Transworld Sport *(S) (92161)*.
9.00 Morning Line. A look ahead to the day's racing *(76548)*.
10.00 Gazzetta Football Italia *(55426)*.
11.00 NBA 24/7. Basketball *(S) (31890)*.
12.00 Rawhide *(14548)*.
1.00 FILM The Pure Hell Of St Trinian's (Frank Launder 1960 UK). Having burned down the school, Ronald Searle's disruptive boarding-school girls are shipped off to the Middle East, where they mix it up with harems and secret agents. Irene Handl replaced Alastair Sim as the headmistress in this third St Trinian's outing *(26777884)*.
2.45 Channel 4 Racing. Derek Thompson introduces coverage of four races from Ayr, including, at 4.05, the Scottish Grand National. The others races are the 2.55, 3.25 and 4.40 *(S) (55100221)*.
5.05 Brookside Omnibus *(R)(S) (8221600)*.
6.30 Right to Reply *(S)(T) (548)*.
7.00 A Week in Politics *(S) (7364)*.
8.00 FILM The Halls of Montezuma (Lewis Milestone 1950 US) Solid, well-cast Second World War action drama about a bunch of US Marines fighting their way through the Pacific islands. With Richard Widmark, Jack Palance, Robert Wagner and Karl Malden *(20373708)*.
10.10 Eurotrash. Meet the official Italian transsexual movement *(R) (892242)*.
10.45 *Homicide: Life on the Street.* Bayliss and Lewis investigate the murder of a prostitute by a homeless man *(S)(T) (861628)*.
11.40 Hill Street Blues. Has there been a cover-up in a case linking a councillor to a young prostitute? *(R)(T) (683762)*.
12.40 FILM A Wedding (Robert Altman 1978 US). Altman brings his distinctive style to bear on this ensemble piece about a *nouveau riche* Southern wedding. The sprawling cast includes Carol Burnett, Mia Farrow, Lillian Gish and Lauren Hutton (S)(T) *(32162049)*.
3.00 The Best of Aykroyd, Belushi and Chase *(R) (34515)*.
4.00 Rock of the North(S) *(4873575)*.
4.55 Let the Blood Run Free. *To 5.25am.*

Channel 5

6.00 Dappledown Farm *(5347161)*.
6.30 Attractions *(R)(S) (6680906)*.
7.00 5 News Early *(S) (2750451)*.
7.30 Havakazoo: Wimzie's House *(2746258)*.
8.00 Alvin and the Chipmunks *(2364987)*.
8.30 Land of the Lost *(2363258)*.
9.00 Beverly Hills, 90210 *(T) (9680074)*.
9.55 Beverly Hills, 90210 *(1090635)*.
10.50 Mag Upfront. Young actors re-enact childhood traumas *(R) (85795068)*.
11.00 Turnstyle. Gail McKenna and the team preview and report on the weekend's top sporting clashes *(S) (37813364)*.
12.50 5 News *(S) (11800161)*.
1.00 The Mag. Josie D'Arby introduces the afternoon entertainment slot for young people. Including "Blagger's Guide" with Brendan Coogan, "The Rad" with Christian Stevenson and "VATV". Plus, "USA High", the teenage drama series set in an American school in Paris *(S) (95500513)*.
3.15 Sunset Beach Omnibus *(13310548)*.
6.00 5 News and Sport *(9506722)*.
6.05 Hercules: the Legendary Journeys. The demi-god defends a group of travellers from a pterodactyl *(S) (3125161)*.
6.55 Night Fever. Suggs hosts the karaoke entertainment show *(S) (5588703)*.
7.50 5 News and Sport *(S) (1396838)*.
8.10 JAG. Adventure series about a US navy *lawyer. Rabb* and *Austin investigate the* death of a naval officer murdered on the grounds of Arlington National Cemetery, the third man to be killed there in the last year *(3498432)*.
9.00 Halifax FP. New drama import series selling itself as the Australian *Cracker*, and starring former soap star Rebecca Gibney as tough young forensic psychiatrist Jane Halifax. The lass faces a professional and personal dilemma when a colleague breaches his ethical code by having an affair with a patient. But the indiscretion turns into a far more serious matter when the lover is run over and killed *(T) (32822161)*.
10.55 Twin Peaks. One of Channel 5's more inspired purchases – it might just be time to have another look at David Lynch's ground-breaking 1990 TV drama. The question for cherry pie-munching FBI Agent Dale Cooper (Kyle MacLachlan) and the townsfolk of the eponymous Pacific north-west lumber community is, of course, who killed Laura Palmer? Sherilyn Fenn, Joan Chen, Ray Wise, Sheryl Lee and Lara Flynn Boyle co-star *(T) (46393635)*.
12.45 FILM Electra Glide in Blue (James William Guerico 1973 US). Pint-sized patrolman Robert Blake wants to trade in his Electra Glide bike for plainclothes detective status. Strange, slow-burning cult drama from record producer Guerico *(27618469)*.
3.00 FILM Cry for Me, Billy (William A Graham 1972 US). Violent frontier adventure about a young gunfighter who does his best to protect a group of Indians after many of them are killed while in the custody of the US Cavalry. Cliff Potts stars *(2011407)*.
4.40 Prisoner: Cell Block H *(6360865)*.
5.30 Whittle *(R)(S)(5248846)*. *To 6.00am.*

ITV/Regions

ANGLIA
As London except: 12.30pm Movies, Games and Videos *(24971)*. 1.05 Anglia News and Weather *(22329722)*. 1.40 Warner Cartoon *(39684703)*. 1.50 Film: The Golden Voyage of Sinbad *(56925548)*. 3.50 seaQuest DSV *(6487093)*. 5.05 Anglia News, Sport and Weather *(6875258)*. 1.15 Film: Presumed Guilty *(828662)*. 2.55 Collins and Maconie's Movie Club *(3560643)*. 3.25 Customs Classified *(4758488)*. 4.15 Jones and Jury *(19406407)*. 4.40 - 5.30am Shift *(9896662)*.

CENTRAL
As London except: 12.30pm Premiere *(24971)*. 1.05 Central News *(22329722)*. 1.40 Movies, Games and Videos *(22036613)*. 2.10 Film: Disney's Napoleon and Samantha *(608364)*. 3.50 seaQuest DSV *(6487093)*. 5.05 Central News *(8684426)*. 5.10 Central Match – Goals Extra *(5948364)*. 4.05 Jobfinder *(9882858)*. 5.20 - 5.30am Asian Eye *(2172643)*.

HTV WALES
As London except: 12.30pm Movies, Games and Videos *(24971)*. 1.05 HTV Wales News *(22329722)*. 1.40 Film: Murder by Death *(53296155)*. 3.20 Stuntmasters *(8081337)*. 3.55 Airwolf *(3593819)*. 5.05 HTV Wales News and Sports Results *(6875258)*. 1.15 Film: Presumed Guilty *(828662)*. 2.55 Collins and Maconie's Movie Club *(3560643)*. 3.25 Customs Classified *(4758488)*. 4.15 Jones and Jury *(19406407)*. 4.40 - 5.30am Shift *(9896662)*.

HTV WEST
As HTV Wales except: 1.05pm HTV West News and Weather *(22329722)*. 1.10 Sportsweek *(6755987)*. 1.45 UEFA Champions League Highlights *(551987)*. 2.15 World of Wonder *(79660628)*. 2.40 Stuntmasters *(9880426)*. 3.20 Airwolf *(6672797)*. 4.10 The List *(8824635)*. 5.05 - 5.20pm HTV West News, Sports Results and Weather *(6875258)*.

MERIDIAN
As London except: 12.30pm Movies, Games and Videos *(24971)*. 1.05 Meridian News and Weather *(22329722)*. 1.40 A406 *(22036613)*. 2.10 Film: The Biscuit Eater *(608364)*. 3.50 seaQuest DSV *(6487093)*. 5.05 Meridian News and Weather *(6875258)*. 1.15 Film: Presumed Guilty *(828662)*. 2.55 Collins and Maconie's Movie Club *(3560643)*. 3.25 Customs Classified *(4758488)*. 4.15 Jones and Jury *(19406407)*. 4.40 - 5.30am Shift *(9896662)*.

WESTCOUNTRY
As London except: 12.30pm Movies, Games and Videos *(24971)*. 1.05 Westcountry News *(22329722)*. 1.40 Planet Rock Profiles *(22036613)*. 2.10 Stuntmasters *(24201S5)*. 2.50 Airwolf *(8864451)*. 3.50 seaQuest DSV *(6487093)*. 5.05 Westcountry News *(6875258)*. 1.15 Film: Presumed Guilty *(828662)*. 2.55 Collins and Maconie's Movie Club *(3560643)*. 3.25 Customs Classified *(4758488)*. 4.15 Jones and Jury *(19406407)*. 4.40 - 5.30am Shift *(9896662)*.

YORKSHIRE
As London except: 12.30pm Movies, Games and Videos *(24971)*. 1.05 Calendar News *(22329722)*. 1.40 Cartoon *(39684703)*. 1.50 Film: Casey's Shadow *(56925548)*. 3.50 seaQuest DSV *(6487093)*. 5.05 Calendar News and Weather *(8684426)*. 5.10 Scoreline *(5948364)*. 1.15 In Bed with Medinner *(4518556)*. 1.50 Film: The Sellout* *(6472371)*. 3.15 Funny Business *(67335)*. 3.45 Collins and Maconie's Movie Club *(17876)*. 4.15 Murder, She Wrote *(4849594)*. 5.05 - 5.30am Sound Bites *(7276865)*.

CHANNEL 3 NORTH EAST
As Yorkshire except: 1.05pm North East News *(22329722)*. 5.05 North East News and Weather *(8684426)*. 5.10 - 5.20pm Full Time *(5948364)*.

S4C
As C4 except: 6.05am *Sesame Street (8037109)*. 10.00 Hangin' with Mr Cooper *(295671)*. 10.30 The Monkees *(84819)*. 12.00 Low Season *(7390890)*. 12.20 Film: Dentist on the Job* *(716722)*. 2.00 The Monkees Special *(3531242)*. 6.30 Love Life *(548)*. 7.00 News *(931068)*. 7.15 Noson I'w Chofio *(6029884)*. 8.20 Hel Straeon *(887548)*. 8.50 Pengelli *(852242)*. 9.25 Snwcer – Pencampwriaeth y Byd *(289616)*. 9.55 Etholiad 97 *(895971)*. 10.10 The Surgery *(5288074)*. 11.15 Countryside Undercover *(741490)*. 11.45 Homicide: Life on the Street *(357529)*. 5.25 - 5.40am North to Wales *(7608391)*.

Radio

Radio 1
(97.6-99.8MHz FM)
6.00am Dave Pearce 9.30 Mark Goodier 12.30 Claire Sturgess 3.30 Trevor Nelson 6.30 Danny Rampling – Lovegroove Dance Party 9.00 Radio 1 Rap Show 12.00 Radio 1 Reggae Dancehall Nite 2.00 Essential Mix: Paul Van Dyk 4.00-6.00am Annie Nightingale

Radio 2
(88-91MHz FM)
6.00am Mo Dutta 8.05 Brian Matthew 10.00 Steve Wright 1.00 Foreverett 1.30 The News Huddlines 2.00 Judi Spiers 4.00 Alan Freeman 5.30 Celine Dion in Concert 6.30 Too Much Heaven: The Story of the Bee Gees 7.30 Ruthie Henshall with A Star Is Born (R) 9.30 David Jacobs 10.00 The English Channel 11.00 Bob Harris 1.00 Charles Nove 4.00-7.00am Mo Dutta

Radio 3
(90.2-92.4MHz FM)
6.55am Weather; News Headlines.
7.00 Record Review.
9.00 *Building a Library.*
10.15 Record Release.
12.00 Private Passions. This week Michael Berkeley talks to former Cabinet Secretary Lord Armstrong of Ilminster.
1.00 News; Vintage Years. In the third of four programmes, Dame Janet Baker talks to Brian Kay about the delights and pressures involved in pleasing audiences worldwide as well as the invisible listeners behind the microphone (R)
3.00 BBC Festival Brass. The first of six programmes in which Paul Hindmarsh presents the best of brass band music from two pioneering periods – the early years of original brass band repertoire up to 1930, and the Seventies.
4.00 London International String Quartet Competition.
5.00 Jazz Record Requests.
5.45 Music Matters.
6.30 Live from the Met: Eugene Onegin. The Russian star soprano Galina Gorchakova leads a largely Russian cast in Tchaikovsky's popular opera of thwarted love. Vladimir Chernov, baritone (Onegin), Franco Farina, tenor (Lensky), Marianna Tarasova, mezzo (Olga), Vladimir Ognovenko, bass (Gremin), Chorus and Orchestra of the Metropolitan Opera/Antonio Pappano. Act 1: Act 2 Scene 1.
7.50 The Met Opera Quiz.
8.20 Eugene Onegin, Act 2 Scene 2; Act 3.
10.00 Between the Ears. Six experimental *radiophonic programmes.* The Great Wall on *Clogwyn Du'r Arddu in Snowdonia* is one of the world's most perilous rock faces. Two climbers explore the risks and the rewards of tackling an ascent so difficult as to be 'almost beyond the realms of human comprehension'.
10.45 Grand Union Orchestra. *Rhythm of the Tides* by Tony Haynes is the result of a two-year collaboration between Grand Union and a group of musicians from Lisbon. Debbie Dickinson introduces a recording of the work given in concert in the Queen Elizabeth Hall, London, last October, when they performed the work with singers Maria Joao Silveira, Paulo de Carvalho, Brenda Rattray and Richard Scott.
1.00-7.00am Through the Night.

Radio 4
(92.4-94.6MHz FM; 198kHz LW)
6.00am News Briefing.
6.10 Farming Today.
6.50 *Prayer for the Day.*
6.55 Weather.
7.00 Today.
8.58 Weather.
9.00 News.
9.05 Sport on 4.
9.30 Breakaway.
10.00 News; Loose Ends.
11.00 News; Election Agenda. Today, families throughout Britain *say what they think about single* currencies, social chapters and Brussels, and presenter Vivian White puts their concerns to the policy advisers who have helped shape the election manifestos.
11.30 From Our Own Correspondent.
12.00 Money Box.
12.25 The News Quiz.
12.55 Weather.
1.00 News.
1.10 Any Questions? Jonathan Dimbleby chairs a topical discussion in Hackney, London, with Foreign Secretary Malcolm Rifkind; Liz Lynne, Liberal Democrat spokesperson on social security and disability; and Ruth Deech, principal of St Anne's College, Oxford.
1.55 Shipping Forecast.
2.00 News; Any Answers?
2.30 Saturday Playhouse: Gigi. By Colette. In this new dramatisation by Ayshe Raif, 15-year-old Gigi is being groomed in the arts of becoming a mistress by her doting grandmother and her wealthy aunt. With Julia McKenzie.
3.45 How to Survive in Further Education. (R)
4.00 News; Witnesses.
4.30 Science Now.
5.00 PM.
5.40 You Probably Think This Song Is about You. *See Choice, above.*
5.50 Shipping Forecast.
5.55 Weather.
6.00 Six O'Clock News.
6.25 Week Ending.
6.50 Utopia and Other Destinations.
7.20 Kaleidoscope Feature. Walter Mosley talks to John Harvey about his fictional detective Easy Rawlins and *Gone Fishin'*, the previously unpublished first novel in the series of books which made him one of America's most important black writers.
7.50 On These Days.
8.50 Saturday Night Theatre: The Casebook of Sherlock Holmes. By Sir Arthur Conan Doyle. With Clive Merrison as Holmes and Michael Williams as Dr Watson. (R)
9.35 Classics with Kay.
9.50 Ten to Ten. This week, American author and speaker Jim Wallis talks about the need to *give priority to the poor.*
9.59 Weather.
10.00 News.
10.15 The Donahue Sisters. Geraldine Aron's radio version of her acclaimed off-Broadway stage play. With Frances Tomelty. (R)
11.15 Memoirs of a Maladjusted Teacher. (R)
11.30 Stanza on Stage. Poet Edwin Morgan and jazz musician Tommy Smith collaborate in *Beasts of Scotland*, recorded at last year's Glasgow International Jazz Festival.
12.00 News.
12.30 Late Story: Flight. By Doris Lessing. Read by Jack Klaff.
12.48 Shipping Forecast.
1.00 As World Service.
5.50 Inshore Forecast.
5.51 Bells on Sunday.
5.55-6.00am Shipping Forecast.

Radio 4 LW
(92.4-94.6MHz FM; 198kHz LW)
No Variations

Radio 5
(693, 909kHz MW)
6.00am Dirty Tackle 6.30 The Breakfast Programme 9.00 Weekend 10.00 Richard Littlejohn 11.00 Sport on Five 6.06 Six-0-Six 8.05 The Treatment 9.00 Brief Lives 9.30 Asian Perspective 10.00 Richard Dallyn's Election Night 11.00 News Extra 12.00 After Hours 2.00 Up All Night 5.00-6.00am Morning Reports

Classic FM
(100-101.9MHz FM)
6.00am Sarah Lucas 9.00 Countdown 12.00 Masters of Their Art 1.00 Alan Mann 3.00 Jane Markham 6.00 Gardening Forum 7.00 Opera Guide 8.00 Evening Concert 10.00 The Classic Quiz 12.00 Sally Peterson 2.00 Evening Concert 4.00-6.00am Sally Peterson

Virgin Radio
(1215, 1197-1260kHz MW 105.8MHz FM)
6.00am Lynn Parsons 10.00 Russ 'n' Jono's Greatest Hits 12.00 Jeremy Clark 3.00 The Album Chart with Mark Forrest 6.00 Robin Banks 10.00 Janey Lee Grace 2.00-6.00am Howard Pearce

World Service
(198kHz LW)
1.00am Newsdesk 1.30 Letter from America 1.45 Britain Today 2.00 Newsdesk 2.30 On Your Behalf 3.00 Newsday 3.30 Music Review 4.00 World News 4.05 World Business Review 4.15 Sports Roundup 4.30 From Our Own Correspondent 5.00 Newsdesk 5.30-6.00am Global Business

Choice

You Probably Think This Song is about You (5.40pm R4) is a new series about people who have good reasons for thinking that they have had a song written about them: today, Lucy Vodden, nursery-school classmate of Julian Lennon (left), whose portrait of her inspired John to write "Lucy in the Sky with Diamonds".

Satellite/cable

SKY 1
7.00am Orson and Olivia *(98109)*. 7.30 Delfy and His Friends *(77616)*. 8.00 Press Your Luck *(27548)*. 8.30 Love Connection *(26819)*. 9.00 Quantum Leap *(14722)*. 10.00 Kung Fu – The Legend Continues *(93600)*. 11.00 Legends of the Hidden City *(77513)*. 11.30 Sea Rescue *(78242)*. 12.00 Wrestling *(63884)*. 1.00 Wrestling *(45432)*. 2.00 Star Trek *(42432)*. 3.00 Star Trek: The Next Generation *(52258)*. 4.00 Star Trek: Deep Space Nine *(64093)*. 5.00 Star Trek: Voyager *(8529)*. 6.00 Kung Fu – The Legend Continues *(69068)*. 7.00 Hercules: The Legendary Journeys *(61187)*. 8.00 Coppers *(8906)*. 8.30 Cops I *(4513)*. 9.00 Cops II *(60277)*. 9.30 The Serial Killers *(64513)*. 10.00 Law and Order *(11628)*. 11.00 LA Law *(74529)*. 12.00 The Movie Show *(50846)*. 12.30 LAPD *(11469)*. 1.00 Dream On *(93223)*. 1.30 Smouldering Lust *(59812)*. 2.00-6.00am Hit Mix *(7735240)*.

SKY 2
7.00pm Superboy *(4441161)*. 7.30 Superboy *(3101258)*. 8.00 Melrose Place *(1573074)*. 9.00 Pacific Drive *(1593838)*. 10.00 Tales from the Crypt *(8411987)*. 10.30 Tales from the Crypt *(8420635)*. 11.00 Stand and Deliver *(8084567)*. 11.30 Stand and Deliver *(7949703)*. 12.00-6.00am Hit Mix *(8066372)*.

MOVIE CHANNEL
6.00am Joe at the Kingdom of the Bees *(9491548)*. 7.05 Joe at the Kingdom of the Ants *(2982242)*. 8.15 Lancer Spy* *(14739987)*. 10.00 Batman Forever *(59635)*. 12.00 They Watch *(54277)*. 2.00 The Long Voyage Home* *(89890)*. 4.00 With Honors *(4703)*. 6.00 Rolling Thunder *(11646)*. 8.00 Batman Forever *(61141)*. 10.00 Under Siege 2: Dark Territory *(631364)*. 11.45 Wes Craven's New Nightmare *(577987)*. 1.40 Under Siege 2: Dark Territory *(254198)*. 3.25 Confessions of a Sorority Girl *(5469001)*. 4.45-6.25am With Honors *(17347117)*.

SKY MOVIES
6.00am Warlords of Atlantis *(45838)*. 8.00 The Return of Tommy Tricker *(60884)*. 10.00 Medicine River *(51093)*. 12.00 The Land that Time Forgot *(56635)*. 2.00 Little Women *(98548)*. 4.00 The Magic Kid 2 *(71529)*. 5.30 Problem Child 3 *(85971)*. 7.00 Little Women *(90513)*. 9.00 Wolf *(11600)*. 11.00 Indecent Behaviour II *(794567)*. 12.40 An Unmarried Woman *(88017469)*. 2.50 Police Rescue *(7971136)*. 4.20-6.00am *Medicine River (786914)*.

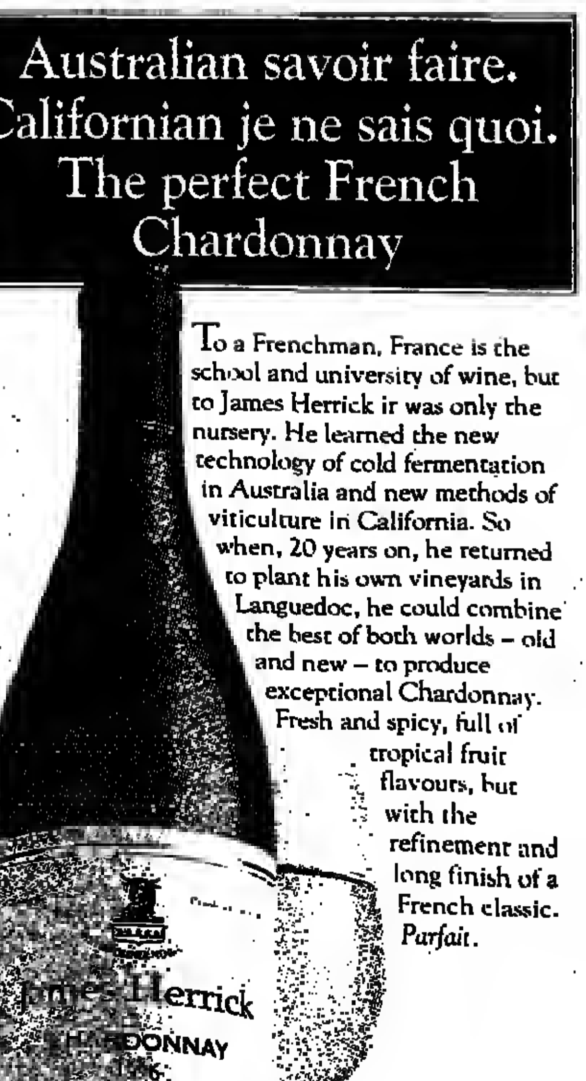
SKY MOVIES GOLD
6.00pm Foreign Correspondent* *(8207242)*. 8.00 Hell Is for Heroes* *(8382987)*. 10.00 Spellbinder *(4373529)*. 11.45 Defenseless *(5339635)*. 1.30 Charley Varrick *(1073440)*. 3.20-5.00am Badman's Territory* *(6656575)*.

SKY SPORTS 1
7.00am World Sports *(30155)*. 7.30 Aerobics *(15890)*. 8.00 Rugby *(24074)*. 8.30 Racing *(23345)*. 9.00 Super League *(22286)*. 11.00 Football: Liverpool v Manchester United – Live *(337432)*. 1.30 Sports Saturday *(53074)*. 2.00 Rugby Union *(2586316)*. 4.15 Sports Saturday Results *(3252703)*. 5.30 Football *(12093)*. 7.00 Spanish Football *(809074)*. 9.30 Rugby Union *(81093)*. 11.30 Australian Rules Football *(68513)*. 1.30-4.00am Spanish Football *(287681)*.

SKY SPORTS 2
7.00am Soccer AM *(4791074)*. 11.00 Golf: Catalan Open *(1479105)*. 1.00 Golf: Cannes Open *(9602155)*. 4.00 Survival of the Fittest *(3151635)*. 4.30 Australian Rules Football *(7970190)*. 6.30 Golf: Cannes Open *(3710221)*. 8.00 Golf: MCI Classic *(2611616)*. 11.00 Golf: Cannes Open *(9400451)*. 12.30-1.00am Senior PGA Tour *(7019038)*.

SKY SPORTS 3
12.00noon Survival of the Fittest *(93320277)*. 12.30 Motorsport *(58172600)*. 3.00 Cricket: West Indies v India *(82563105)*. 10.00 Survival of the Fittest *(93321906)*. 10.30 Snowboard *(93234426)*. 11.00 Rebel Sports *(22211513)*. 11.30-12.00midnight World Sports *(25044600)*.

LIVE TV
6.00am Pin Money 6.30 Fashion 7.00 Sport 7.30 Game of Two *Scarves 8.00 Sham* Rock Quiz 8.30 Looking for Love 8.45 Pet Squad 9.00 Revelations 9.30 Fashion 10.00 Agony 10.30 Looking for Love 10.45 Pet Squad 11.00 Trial TV 11.30 Fate and Fortune 12.00 Why Flies? 12.30 Agony 1.00 Agony 1.15 Agony 1.30 Trial TV 2.00 Fashion 2.30 Agony 3.00 Fate and Fortune 3.30 Pin Money 4.00 Looking for Love 4.30 Sham Rock Quiz 5.00 Agony 5.30 Why Flies? 6.00 Fashion 6.30 Sports 7.00 Pin Money 7.30 Game of Two Scarves 8.00 Bushido 9.00 Handy Hunks; Sham Rock Quiz 9.30 Eva's Seventies Pop Show 10.00 Topless Darts in Space; Sport 10.30 Stand-Up 11.00 Topless Darts in Space; Fate and Fortune 11.30 Sex 11.55 *Erotica Exotica* 12.30 *Kiss TV* 1.30-6.00am Night-time programmes



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